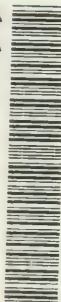


ODDS AND ENDS
BY
WED. P. MAH.

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ODDS AND ENDS

AND

TALES IN VERSE.

BY

NED. P. MAH.

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ODDS AND ENDS.

ODDS AND ENDS.

M A Y .

Through the smiling meadows
Wanders little May,
Plucking buds and blossoms
Lying in her way.

With the golden sunlight
Glittering on her hair,
Was earthborn cherub ever
More exquisitely fair ?

No thought has May of danger
And no care at all :
Home is close behind her,
Mother within call.

O Fate ! what wrongs are hidden
In the veil of years—
Shall these wreathéd smilings
Turn to bitter tears ?

Shall this flood of sunshine
Change to stormy night ?
Shall mists of Sorrow gather,
Hiding home from sight ?

Briers instead of blossoms,
Thorns for flowers be found :
Must her path be stony,
Dangers throng her round ?

Gambol on, Sweet Innocent,
In childhood's happy hours :
Life is not made of sunshine,
Meadowlands and flowers.

We all must eat of Knowledge
Of Evil and of Good ;
To them alone the laughter
Who have passed through the wood.

LA JOIE DE VIVRE.

" Il n'y a que la gaité et la bonté, le reste est un simple cauchemar."
—*Zola.*

The joy of living ? 'Tis not the possession
Of pampered whims our selfish thoughts inspire
It is the offspring of a wise repression
Of every selfish aim and vain desire.

For our true happiness is aye reflected
From the bright faces which our deeds make blest ;
Small kindnesses which pass, p'haps undetected,
The cheerfulness which makes the worst seem best.

Self-sacrifice for those our love makes love us,
Paths made by self-effacement, pleasure rife
Gild earth with radiance from the heaven above us,
Unseal the fountains of the Joy of Life.

THE STAGE DRIVER'S PARABLE.

Behind four sheeny-coated, willing cattle
I sat by old Ned's side,
While the quaint humor of his jocund rattle
Shortened the ride.

"This hyar ten miles," said he, "is an invention
Of some hoss-hating devil."

"How so?" I asked, and gave the track attention;
"'Tis a dead level."

"That's so," said he, "and that's jest what's the matter.

"That's whar 'tis, Boss,

"In all Amerikee thar ain't no flatter

"Nor crueller on a hoss,

"And on that same I'll bet my bottom dollar.

"No, rise and fall

"Whar, druv with judgment, they don't touch their collar

"Mostways at all

"Is best for teams. But now they're allus doin'

"All what they know.

"It's rough on wind and limb. They're constant goin'

"No chance to stop and blow.

"This road is jest like Life. No emblem fitter,

"Nothin' it likens more,

"And the smooth road is hardest on a critter

"And makes him shoulder-sore :

"For man can't work, no more than hoss flesh, steady

"Without a rest.

"But a slack trace will make us fresh, and ready

"Next hill to breast.

“ Then on the uppard grade don’t let us grumble—

“ Thar’s One knows best :

“ And when the down grade comes, in spirit humble

“ Thank God for rest !

“ So my advice is—When the whipcord stings us

“ Don’t fret nor foam,

“ But think who ’tis that holds the lines, and brings us

“ The best road home.”

LEFT UNDONE.

'Tis not our deeds which give us, when reviewed,
Cause for repentance,
When, on ourselves, we pass in solitude
Judgment and sentence.

'Tis not the Memory of Things Done which stings
And makes us moan
Our idle cowardice, but of the things
We left undone

Which makes us cry "Thou Fool." The openings
missed,
The chances thrown away :
And yet we add omissions to the list
Of our sins, day by day.

To all men there are open roads to Fortune
And avenues to Fame,
Yet we live lives of Failure and Abortion
And die without a name.

Learn we the lesson which our past should teach,
And seize the passing hour,
Gathering all Fate places in our reach—
Nettle or flower.

Among our Maxims let us keep in view
This above all :
*To do well all that we find worth to do
Or great or small.*

IN EXCELSIS.

At evening's close a warrior youth
Came toiling o'er the mountain's crest
The wayworn pilgrim sighed "In truth
"I am weary. Let me rest.

"The night is near. The dying sun
"Is sinking in the livid west
"Life's day is done, Life's strife is won
"I am weary. Let me rest."

His broken sword, his armour's rust
A tale of deadly fight expressed,
His features were begrimed with dust—
A weary wanderer seeking rest.

A marble edifice he found,
Entered, a self-invited guest,
And sinking, swooning on the ground
Sighed his reïterate prayer for rest.

And as in pain he lay, and groaned,
A maiden asked him his behest.
Lifting his heavy eyes he moaned
"I am weary. Let me rest."

Then on his clay-cold brow, a kiss
With icy lips the maiden pressed.
Faintly he murmured, "Who is this
"That gives the weary warrior rest?"

Ice was her touch and chill her breath,
She lulled his tired head on her breast,

And softly whispered, "I am death;
 "'Tis I who give the weary rest."

Then on his vision rose a city,
 The end of his world-weary quest,
And o'er the gate thrown wide in pity—
 "Enter Ye Weary. Here is Rest."

The maiden left him at the portal
 Of the bright mansions of the blest,
To sojourn in a youth immortal
 In Heaven's serene, eternal rest.

FAR ABOVE RUBIES.

I do not dwell in marble halls,
Plain painted pine my doors ;
No gilded cornices adorn my walls
No brussels decks my floors.

Nec aureum, nec lacunar. Yet my cot
Holds something which
Makes my home graceful, for, though I am not,
My Love is rich.

Rich in an inexhausted mine of health
And in a form made fair ;
By sixteen summers' boundless, countless wealth
Of charms beyond compare.

Rich—for the pearls her ruby lips enlock
Dazzle beholders :
No opal's changeful brilliance can mock
Her radiant shoulders.

Rich in her tresses amplitude of gold,
The turquoise of her eyes,
And, beyond all, the treasured love untold,
Which in her true heart lies.

Frugal my home, yet often, in my mind,
To heaven's I compare
Its portal still, for entering, I find
An angel there.

THE ROLL CALL.

In agony of mortal pain
Upon the gore-besodden plain,
Amid the dying and the slain,
 A youthful warrior lay.

With none to staunch his wound, nor heed
His thirst, nor tend him in his need.
Still at his side his faithful steed
 Kept guard with mournful neigh.

“ Ere many tortured hours be fled
“ Life’s fever will be o’er,” he said,
“ Rest will be mine, and brother Ned
 “ Be heir to house and land.

“ And Maudlein. Well! She never knew
“ Though Ned had won I loved her too.
“ Her heart *was* his. Now, he may sue
 “ For both her heart and hand.

“ And you, my trusty steed, will find
“ A master better and more kind;
“ Not braver perhaps—Well, never mind,
 Whatever is, is best.”

Then quicker came the sobbing breath,
And the blue eyes were closed in death,
And through the portals passed his wraith—
 The portals of the blest.

Then from the camp, at even's fall,
Shrill rang the distant bugle call
The Assembly sounding, to recall
All who survived that day.

And urged by habitude, perforce,
Hungry, yet hesitant, the horse
Turning, reluctant, from the corse,
Whinnied, and went his way.

OVER THE SEA.

A lover knelt at a maiden's side
In the flush of his manhood, his life's young pride,
But smiling through tears she strove to hide

She murmured, "It may not be.
"For what you would is not mine to give,
"And lone and lorn I must ever live.

"My heart is over the sea."

When the ocean lies like a glassy plain,
Or when it moans like a soul in pain,—
When the storm winds howl o'er the raging main,—

In the castle on the lea

A face at the casement pale and grave,
When the hot calm broods or the tempests rave,
Looks out on the boundless sea.

And the maiden gazed for many a year
With a faith that overwhelmed her fear,
Yet never might tidings reach her ear—

Not dead but false was he—

Till kissing her cheek with a chilling breath
On the tempest's wing came the Angel of Death
Over the angry sea.

LOOKING BACK.

Where are they now :
The silent voices and the vanished hands,
The merry feet which trod with ours Life's sands
In sweet companionship in distant lands ?
Seek not to know.

Haply are some
Like withered flowers in the cold dark tomb.
Others, beloved and loving, live and bloom ;
To others sordid cares leave love no room
In hearts grown numb.

To meet again
Those whom in loving blindness we mistook
For kindred spirits—like some well-bound book
We bought to read, but reading soon forsook—
Would give but pain.

O sweet illusions
Flushing with rosy tints our sombre lot !
Why from our minds the pleasant memories blot ?
What were existence worth if it were not
For its delusions ?

O LOVE! O FAITH! O CONSTANCY! GOD
PITY THOSE WHO TRUST!

A soul that writhed in agony,
And lived alone to long to die,
Cried with exceeding bitter cry,
“God pity those who trust!”

A jaundiced soul that once deceived,
No more in constancy believed,
And moaned in anguish unrelieved,
“God pity those who trust!”

But those whose Faith as dawn is bright,
Unshadowed yet by sceptic-night,
They only pray, “God’s pity light
“On those who *cannot* trust!”

ON A WATCH-CHAIN OF GOLDEN HAIR.

O chain of gold-brown hair! whose tiny strands
Now hold this toy secure in your frail bands,
Told you your story?
Who wove your braided silk, and when, and how,
What could you tell? For all we know is now,
That once, erewhile, of Northern maiden's brow
You formed the glory.

Why are ye dead that should survive your owner,
And live within her grave when all she loved bemoan her?
Haply some fever
Caused that the closing of the cruel shears
Deformed her beauty and cut short your years,
That now repose upon a breast that bears
A patent lever.

Or, perhaps, of one who lived in deep distress,
And owned no gold but in her golden tress,
You were the treasure:
Who, with your value, to her mother crept,
And from the door awhile the wolf still kept,
Though, as she looked upon the coins, she wept
Tears bitter beyond measure.

Haply, entwined with pearls and waxen flowers,
Ye shone beneath the gas at midnight hours,
Crowning some beauty peerless;
Haply some wretch, who in the weary street
Smiled haggard smiles on all she chanced to meet,
Displayed you as a glittering bait, to feet
That walked in virtue fearless.

Or, perhaps, ye drooped in soft caressing curl
On the white neck of some fair peasant girl
 In Northern village:
Perhaps the soft auburn of her gleaming tress
Has mingled with dark locks which stooped to bless
The loving maiden with a chaste caress,
 In pause of work, or tillage.

Or, perhaps, some matron owned you, and your silk
Has veiled from vulgar gaze the breast whose milk
 The mother's darling drank.
Perhaps, long ago, you were the chiefest toy
Of tiny fingers of the girl or boy
For whom the peasant, as his highest joy
 Would Heaven, each evening, thank.

Yet whether in neat braids, through hours of toil,
Or drooping in a careless, witching coil
 On point-lace collar
You lived erewhile. Or, were your story known
'Twould move to bitter tears, or smile, or frown,
I only know I paid for you, cash down,
 One Danish dollar.

AT MIDNIGHT.

I stood at midnight, in the stillness, high
 Upon the mountain's crest—in darkness, save
For the pale orbs that twinkled in the sky
 Like vigilant, luminous eyes, and gave
A sense of Heaven's protection, while below
 The City glimmered, mapped by myriad lamps,
Like lights sown broadcast o'er vast fields, whose glow,
 Commingling with the chill nocturnal damps,
Rose like a luminous mist into the air.
 I thought of those who slept in that brief trance
Which is Death's prototype. Of maidens fair,
 Of youths still dreaming of the ball or dance;
Of wives, and stern hard men who loved the strife
 And turmoil of the world, and snatched with pain
These few hours' respite from the fevered life
 That was so full of pleasure, work or gain.
I thought, "When these shall die and when their eyes
 "Shall close in a last sleep to wake no more,
"And their souls enter on the rest which lies
 "In the Bright City on the far-off shore,
"Will Heaven be Heaven to these?" But straight,
 the thought
Fled, for I knew should each one name the hour
That his life's greatest happiness had wrought
 It would be that in which he felt the power
Of love most potent. When, with heart too full
 For vulgar speech, he longed but to be near
Those whom he loved and live. And cold and dull
 Seemed even the Art that his soul held so dear.
And since sometimes on earth this sense is given—
 This foretaste of the bliss that is above—
Let us not doubt our happiness in Heaven,
 Since Heaven is perfect Rest and perfect Love.

OLD TIM.

Drive over the river ? O, yes, with delight !
It looks such a beautiful dazzling white.
But they tell me the road is so awfully rough,
All ruts, cracks, and *cahots*. Why, Mary, what stuff !
Its all filled up and levelled, and, well ! I declare
There's Old Tim, the journalier himself, sitting there
Blowing his cloud in his easy chair.
Whiteheaded, ruddy faced, rugged Old Tim,
Who has no one to smooth his path for him.

Good day, my old friend ! Do you never sigh,
When the sleighs and cutters go dashing by :
“ Why must I labor to smooth the way,
Why must I toil that others may play
Who are much better able to work than I,
Who am growing old and must very soon die
And have none to make easy my road for me ? ”

“ Ah, no. Why, that wouldn't be true you see
I have a good wife and children three,
Who help to make pleasant my path for me.
Were it not for the love of my faithful Jeanne
I might have been buried again and again.
Jacques and Felix are working in Morial,
And earning good wages since the fall ;
And Marie—she was a tender plant,
And the times were hard and we were in want,
And medicine was dear, and she suffered long,
And we thought she would die, but now she is strong,
Strong and healthy—I'd say, did I dare,
As healthy and blooming as Madame there,

But in beauty Madame is beyond compare—
And now she is married and living nigh,
And has two little children—about so high—
And often their granddad they come to see,
And they patter around him and climb on his knee,
And pull his beard in their childish play,
And their bright smiles help to make smooth his way.
So, should a man's life be ever so rough,
If he be but content and can earn enough
For dinner and pipe, and to cover the backs
Of his children in winter, by mending the tracks,
And when times are bad and there's naught to do
Some good friend bestows a piastre or two—
Merci M'sieu, that's the first to-day—
Why then I am not the man to say
I have no one to smooth life's road for me,
Salut M'sieu, soyez benit."

A WINTER SIMILE.

See the earth's white robe implying
Countless myriad crystals lying
Until touched by solar flame
Flake with flake commingles, blending
In invisible vapors, tending
Ever heavenwards whence they came.

Children are of kindred fashion,
Cold and chaste and free from passion,
Each distinct and isolate.
Love the sun which wakens feeling,
Thaws, melts, commingles hearts, revealing
Kindred love their souls innate.

Till the spirit emanation
In invisible translation
Re-ascends to realms above.
To the realms of Love supernal,
To the throne of Love Eternal,
To the God of Light and Love.

LUTHERAN, CATHOLIC, AND BROAD CHURCH.

LUTHERAN.

Through the dim windows the sunbeams shone
Tinting the flags with a pallid gold ;
And the droning words of the preacher fell
On the hearts of the people as stony and cold.

CATHOLIC.

The sun's last rays through the stained glass shot
Illuming the frescoes with living fire :
And the words of the preacher came fast and hot
And scorched their souls with the bigot's ire.

BROAD CHURCH.

From heaven's arc the sunbeams fell
As they fell in Boaz' fields on Ruth :
On "elect of heaven" and "doomed to hell" :
And the preacher preached the simple Truth.

No church, no pulpit, no roof above,
No narrow sect or creed were his.
He taught of Duty, he spoke of Love
And Justice, which Truest Mercy is.

He said God's glance was like the sun
That fell on all men, keen and bright,
And made of rich and poor but one :
He simply preached of Wrong and Right.

INCREASE OF SORROW ALSO.

Whom the gods love die young, to them Life's page
Seems fairly traced and stainless. At their age
They cannot read the terrible truths that lie
Hidden in words, nor learn to dread to die.
To them existence is but as the breast
Of the calm ocean. Of the things that rest
Beneath the surface in a hideous sleep
Monsters and marrowless bones and wrecks the deep
Whispers not as it idly laps the shore
Of the new world their eager eyes explore.
Happy indeed are they! To us the years
Bring but increase of knowledge and of tears.

CAPTAIN-ADJUTANT C. D. G. GAGUIER.

Died at Fort Garry, March 3, 1873.

Dead—Not as he had wished to die
His face upturned towards the sky
His feet towards the foe :

Dead—Not upon the battle field
Resolved to die but not to yield—
In stern strife stricken low :

Though branded with Disease, fell Death
Stole, cowardwise, the hero breath
Yet in life's early prime :

Still be his meed of glory bright
As though, in battle for the right,
He changed Earth's veil for Heaven's light
Eternity for Time.

DE PROFUNDIS.

The light has gone out of my life,
The shadows are high on the wall,
Life's wine is turned into gall,
And the hand that has stricken the blow
Is the tenderest hand of all.

Strange contradiction of fate !
She who loved me and had the will
To be mine, is the one to kill.
Strange that my bitterest foe
Is the one I loved best and love still.

Smiling, she told me my doom ;
Caressing, my heart she broke ;
Fawning, my death warrant spoke.
And the voice that robbed me of hope
The sweetest of echoes awoke.

I loved as none other could love,
But dissembled, and seemed so cold.
She laughed at me, "Quaint and old-
Fashioned" she called me. My heart
Tumultuously beat and grew bold.

One word and she had been mine,
But I was poor, without fame—
She had wealth and a name.
Let the worthiest wear the prize,
I can die, nor hers be the blame.

Her arms were around me. She smiled—
“You will come to the wedding of course?”
My tongue clove to my jaws. I grew hoarse.
Her eyes glistened, and mine—O my God!
“With pleasure,” I answered perforce.

ANTI-ASCETIC.

The trials that oppress us,
The evils that we moan,
While Heaven but means to bless us
The fault is all our own
When impiously with destiny we fight.
Why with a phantom heroism striving,
Turn we to misery the bliss of living?
Yield, yield and all is right!

With dove-like eyes and tender
A maiden smiled on me;
Our stock of gold was slender
We said "It may not be."
Long time we strove our happiness to blight,
A year of misery we passed.
Idiots! But wiser grown, at last
We loved, and all was right.

Then for a time I shrank
From wine in every shape,
Shunning my friends who drank
Deep of the ruby grape.
Long time this pious fervor blurred my sight
My friends were hale and jolly,
I drooped with melancholy,
I drank and all was right.

God gave our pleasures to us
Expressly to enjoy,
Then when enjoyments woo us
O let us not be coy.

Stand not like Stylites on his giddy height
But do as others do—
Be wise and merry too,
Go with the stream along and all is right.

AN ILLUSION DISPELLED.

Ah, me! How my memory lingers
In the primitive organ loft,
Where she woke, with her roseate fingers,
The swelling notes mystic and soft.

She was lost in a holy communing
With the angels far away;
And her whole bright being seemed tuning
For its flight from this earthly clay.

There was no earth taint—no fraction
Of our earthly sinful leaven—
She was wrapped in a saint-like abstraction—
Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven!

She left with her sister. I followed
Their footsteps, until, in a trice
A tiny white wicket had swallowed
Her up in her paradise.

She was the angel within it,
I was the outcast without;
But through the thick laurels, next minute,
Her voice rang melodiously out:

“Sang sweetly? Why that’s of the queerest,
My thoughts were so far from the spot!
I was thinking all church-time, my dearest,
Shall I purchase that chignon or not?”

ON THE PIER-HEAD.

Sad at heart, yet sleep refusing,
Wrapped in melancholy musing,
Time's slow flight I sat abusing

On the pier-head in the gloaming ;
Watched the billows lazy foaming,
“And,” I thought, “I’m tired of roaming.

“Had I but some point to steer to,
Some fixed purpose to adhere to,
Some great heart I might be dear to!”

The odour of some subtle essence
Warned me of a damsel's presence
Sitting by in mute quiescence

Gazing o'er the far, far ocean :
Till she whispered, with emotion,
“O, how lovely!” as her notion

Of the scene. And I, still gazing
On herself, her beauty praising,
Echoed “Lovely!” With amazing

Brilliant eye and cheek, she started,
Her ruby lips, surprised, she parted—
“Didn't know that”—and she darted

Frightened glances round about her—
“Mamma must have gone without her!”
Then my bashful heart grew stouter.

And with eloquent emotion,
Told her my life was like the ocean
In its restless, peaceless motion,

Lacked some nobler aims employing.
Then she cried, and stopped my toying
With her locks, "O, how annoying,

"Here's mamma!" No more she uttered;
Seraph-like away she fluttered.
Still the billows broke and spluttered

On the pier-head melancholy.
Then I cried, "O, hang this folly!
Sherry cobbler were more jolly."

Obtained the nectar, I immerse
Straws in it, then seek my purse,
That the price I may disburse.

Not there? Stolen? Still I find,
Light-fingered Houri, you are kind,
You restore my peace of mind.

THE BLASTED OAK.

A LEGEND OF THE LOVER'S WALK.

'Twas a fair even in the summertide,
And two were sauntering in the Lover's Walk
As they had often sauntered side by side,
Speaking the speechless tongue which lovers talk.

But now their converse seemed of greater weight
And Edwin held his courser by the rein
Pleading beneath the moonbeams long and late
That May would yield him his great love again.

Then she : " You are too young to know your mind ;
" Men love not, as we women, once for all,
" By no rash promise your free action bind,
" Swear me no oath which you would fain recall ;

" But, all unfettered, to the world go forth—
" Among its tutored daughters you will find
" Those who in beauty, culture, state and worth,
" Leave me, your rustic sweetheart, far behind.

" Go forth unfettered, freely seek and choose,
" Roam where and how you will, or chance, a year..
" No fear, in the far quest, my love to lose,
" For still unchanged, you then will find me here.

" Then you can lay your hand upon your heart,
" And look me in the eyes, and say to me :
" ' I have been true in thought and deed, Sweetheart.'
" I will be yours." They stood beneath a tree,

A stalwart, giant oak, the forest's pride :
And Edwin, raising up his eyes on high,
Cried out aloud, " What token, O my bride,
" In my long absence still remaining nigh

" Shall symbol the true keeping of my troth ? "
Then he was silent for a little space
Bethinking him the wording of an oath,
And gazing in the loved one's wistful face.

And then he cried aloud on Heaven to hear
And ratify and register his vow—
" If in the fleeting of one little year
" I love my Love less soulfully than now,

" Blast Thou this oak that so my Love may know
" That I am false. And do Thou so to me,
" Blighting me too. That to the world I show
" My sin : as my Love learns it from the tree."

And May raised up in haste her little palm
And pressed it on his lips to stay his word,
For her heart stopped as with a sudden qualm ;
She inly prayed that Heaven had not heard.

" Think me not impious, May. Till winds my wraith
" Not crowns could tempt me, nor a Houri's smile
" Win me from thee. O thou of little faith
" Still let this oak all doubts, all fears beguile.

" And when the green leaves wither and decay
" In the chill coming of the wintertide
" Say not so Edwin's love will fade away ;
" But—Edwin soon shall claim me as his bride

“ When these bare branches bud again in May.”
And then they wept and kissed, and kissed and sighed
And wrenched them, bleeding, heart from heart, away ;
And Edwin galloped forth on his long ride.

Intently, till the jealous box trees deck
The maiden watched the rider and the steed
Dwindle on the far road to a mere speck—
And then her soul seemed desolate indeed.

And falling on her knees she prayed to God
To keep him true to her and to his oath,
“ Yet should he fail,” she cried, “ O spare the rod,
“ Nor deal with him according to his oath.”

Then, as she rose and wended sadly home
The zephyrs rustled tremulous 'mid the leaves
And seemed to whisper—We do freely roam,
And our caress each trembling leaf deceives.

Then, as she reached an opening in the glade
Startled, she halted for a moment, where
Two quaint shaped bushes the weird phantoms made
Of one who knelt, and one who heard his prayer.

Alone the semblance of the form that bent
O'er him who knelt recumbent on the sward,
And seemed in act of listening with intent
To grant the prayer of him she stooped toward—

Seemed so opaque, so darkly gross, so dense,
So the antipodes of her fragile self
Some dire presentiment struck her fearful sense
Like whisperings of some mischief loving elf.

She prayed within herself it might not be
An omen of the future of her swain :
And then half wished her Edwin she could see
And take the given freedom back again.

And so in fearful hope, in hopeful fear
She lived and waited in a tearful joy
Through the long months of that eventful year,
And morn should bring her back her errant boy.

* * * *

When first the roseate streaks proclaimed the dawn,
Glad hope within her face, May tripped the lawn
With the light grace of a young timorous fawn.

Beginning with the opening of the day
Her eager watching of the winding way
In fond expectance, beaming, bright and gay.

Her strong hope strengthened by a banished fear,
To hear the welcome hoop she strained her ear,
Her eyes to scan the form she held most dear.

Thus the first glimpse of Edwin's form to gain,
Kneeling she crouched and watched across the plain
The serpent road's white thread, and watched in vain.

Nor till the twilight hours were drawing near
Trickled, with the first doubt, a truant tear ;
She dashed it off—" Ere night he will be here ! "

But when the sun set in a lurid cloud
And darkness fell, her sinking form she bowed—
Her courage failed her and she wept aloud.

Then the wind's music in the lofty tops
In fitful murmurings begins and stops,
And sky tears fall in large, infrequent drops.

Then Heaven's artillery in noisy play
With lightning flashes, brighter than the day
Shewed her that Edwin was not on the way.

Then came a crash that shook the wondering world,
And seething firebolts from the clouds down hurled,
In sudden flame the giant Oak-tree furlled.

Beneath the calcined stump they found her form,
Blackened and scorched and battered by the storm:
Pulseless she lay, yet still her heart was warm.

No human art the flickering spark might save—
Beneath the blasted oak they made her grave.
Thrice happy May! Our storms are yet to brave.

AN ENCOUNTER.

It chanced upon a Sunday morn
The Jester sauntered o'er the mountain,
And great thoughts in his brain were born
Of Fantasy's perennial fountain.

Doffed were his motley cap and bells,
His week-day air of fun and folly :
He wore the garb of quiet swells,
His private air of melancholy.

But from the weed no smoke arose,
He frantically puffed by snatches,
In pocket of his motley hose
He'd left the box that held his matches.

An ulster coat and round felt hat
Made him aware that something human
Was near. He never noted that
That something was a lovely woman.

In courteous tones he asked a light ;
A still small voice his dull ear catches,
Saying, " We sometimes flames ignite,
" And certainly make half the matches.

" But we're not smokers." " Ah ! " he cried,
" In pity pardon my abstraction.
" Yet may I ask : Why do you hide
" 'Mid these wild rocks so much attraction ? "

"To-day I rose resolved to roam,"
She said, "Existence seemed a vanity—
"Tired of the dull routine of home—
"A useless life's effete inanity.

"To do, to suffer, or to die,
"I cried in fevered agitation,
"I care not what, I know not why,
"But death were better than stagnation."

"Why should you stagnate? Those who do
"Are guilty of a moral blindness,
"And see not those around them, who
"Demand a very active kindness.

"The very maid that curls the hair
"That sweetly frames these lovely features
"Requires your love, advice, or care ;
"And so do all your fellow creatures.

"Think of the poor ! Your little wealth,
"How much of poverty might leaven :
"The good that here you do by stealth
"Will bring you always nearer heaven.

"Thus active days and peaceful nights
"Will fit you, one day or another,
"For the supreme of Woman's Rights—
"To be true wife and noble mother.

"Be good and happy. To which end"—
And with his airiest smile he blest her—
"As guide, philosopher and friend,
"Pray constantly consult the Jester."

BETWEEN THE ACTS.

IMPROMPTU.

By an Admirer, on seeing Amelia B. Waugh as "Mercy Merrick."

'Tis well no lust of human eyes
May angel natures leaven:
Else, when the fair Amelia dies,
There will be Waugh in heaven.

REPARTEE.

BY A CYNIC.

If, haply, in the other place
Amelia were crammed,
You then would see her face to face:
Amelia B. damned.

CARPE DIEM.

There are some wayward souls that cannot rest,
Filled with a restless yearning unrepressed—
They never are, but always to be, blest.

When the warm dew from Chloe's lips we press,
Or listen to the vows those lips express,
Let us not pine a past beyond redress :

Let us not dream that other lips were sweeter,
That other arms might yield us joys completer :
But that the weary moments fly the fleeter.

Still let us think that present joys are best,
Let not our secret longings be confessed,
Nor be by past inconstancy distressed.

The loves that were are dead. The loves that are
Tune our hearts' chords to sweeter music far :
From future loves a thousand ills may bar.

Still mindful that our youth is fleeting fast,
Shall we our new love's budding promise blast
By the dear memories that enshrine the last ?

Shall we from the full goblet turn away
Because we tasted nectar yesterday ?
To-morrow may bring none. We drink to-day.

OUT OF THE DEPTHS.

In a garret squalid and cold
Sits a mother with her child,
Penning the writhings of her soul
In language grand and wild.

She is too weak for labor,
Too delicate for toil—
But the spirit crushed, and the stricken heart,
Are poetry's true soil.

And she must live and be nourished
Or her cherished babe would die,
Each line is a cry of agony,
And every word a sigh.

The public cries, "What pathos!
"How touching are these rhymes."
For she wrings the life blood from her soul
For their dollars and their dimes.

What wonder then the language
So exquisitely sad?
'Tis the wail of a desperate agony
That must cry aloud or go mad.

BACHELORS, WHY DON'T YOU ASK ?

Cool and still was the waning day,
The shadows were long on the grass,
And on the steps in the gloaming, lay
A comely lad and lass.

Happy they sat there side by side,
Never a word they spoke,
While Edwin's eyes their gaze divide
Twixt the maid and his cigarette's smoke.

"Will you make me another ?" By Edwin taught
She deftly did her task,
And said, unconsciously speaking her thought,
"I will give you whatever you ask."

What did he ask for ? A kiss or two ?
Her heart and her life-long love ?
He asked them all and he got them too
While the pale moon smiled above.

Faint hearts ! Why do you spurn your luck,
Your love with coldness mask,
The rose is yours if you will but pluck,
Bachelors, why don't you ask ?

BENEATH THE SURFACE.

You thought me stern, harsh, passionless, unfeeling,
Churlish and rough, inanimate and cold,
You wondered why, no tenderness revealing,
I did not grow more lover-like, more bold.

You did not know—how could you?—when we parted
To outward seeming both so blythe and gay,
That I went from you hopeless, broken hearted,
And life-long anguish bore with me away.

You knew not, while you were so sweetly telling
The happiness you wished me on my way,
That tears of blood from out my heart seemed welling,
And words rose to my lips I might not say.

ACROSTIC.

Again the fête of sweet Saint Valentine
Gives us the cue for amorous minstrelsy.
Now timid swains who deem their maids divine,
Each wild euphonious epithet still try,
Slowly inditing the laborious line.

Coy are the Muses and their aid deny,
Humbly although the poets seek their shrine,
Ringing the changes with a hopeless sigh,
In frantic efforts madly to combine
Sounds that still rhyme not, though they know not why,
Till, in despair's strong agony condign,
Into a stationer's they rush and buy
A page whereon, 'mid scrolls and garlands fine,
Naughty, fat, trouserless, small cupids fly.

Cousin, no wild love declaration mine,
Only a fond wish that your way may lie
O'er pleasant paths where life's best flowers entwine.
Can you the author of this wish descry?
Haply you know him, so he need not sign.

ACROSTIC.

Judge not harshly, censure soften.
Under rough, uncouth disguise
Lurks the truest friendship, often
In ambush where we least surmise.
Even as the summer flowers

Rise refreshed from passing showers
Once the sunshine smiles again ;
So Heaven kindly sends us pain—
Alternates our joy with sadness—
Lest we lose all taste for gladness.
If our paths were made too smooth
Even joys would cease to soothe.

Gaily, amid mirth and laughter,
Are our young hours fleeting fast :
Let us live, that our hereafter
Leaves fair records in its past.

ACROSTIC.

A h! you thought I could forget you in the lapsing of the
years,
N ever, though the fickle Goddess strew my path with
fame or gold ;
N ever, though the shadows hide me and the damp of
Death enfold,
I n the pages of the poet, who to varying mirth or tears
E ver sweetly tunes our heartstrings—speaking still
though he be dead.

G ilding our poor earth with love-light—haply you have
erewhile read—
R ead how once a stripling wandered through the fields
of golden grain,
Y et from bird and brook and foliage heard but one low
sweet refrain,
A nd the yellow corn-ears murmured, whispering in their
bearded tips,
“N ever cruel Fate may harm him. He hath pressed
Shön' Rothtraut's lips.”

THE DEATH OF AURELIA.

(From Wilhelm Meister.)

Prone on the green room's couch she lay extended
 While for the victory Death fought hard with Life,
 Her soul's force in mute agonies expended ;
 And pitying colleagues watched the horrid strife.

Ah ! did they know what each proud triumph cost you,
 When voice and hand their noisy plaudits raise ;
 They first will understand when they have lost you
 How real was the mimicry they praise.

“ Leave her ! ” quoth Serlo, named a something nameless,

And gnashed his teeth and stamped his foot in rage,
 “ To gain applause soon, reckless, blushless, shameless
 “ She will rush naked on the wondering stage.”

“ O thoughtless monster ! cruel and inhuman,

“ Can nought your pitiless raillery exhaust ?

“ Is it so very criminal in woman

“ That she has lived and suffered, loved and lost ? ”

“ Spare me awhile. Soon I shall vanish, whither

“ Your bitter raillery I shall not hear,

“ Soon they shall carry me, quite naked, thither

“ Where plaudits ne'er may reach the deafened ear.”

She rose, still in the stage's gaud and gauzes,

And passed, unmantled, through the outer door,

Heedless of rain and storm winds fitful pauses—

It seemed so cool ; she noted nothing more.

Her words were true. Soon she had passed the portal
Where for earth's wrongs, heaven's true nepenthe lies,
Where life's brief fever ends in peace immortal,
And God's own hand shall wipe the tearful eyes.

O stony heart that pitieth not another,
Such mercy as thou shewest would'st thou seek?
Think of the mark of Cain who slew his brother:
Speak gently to the weary and the weak.

JUDGE NOT.

How bitterly recurs in life's revisions
The old, old story
Of fallen idols, broken gods, and visions
Of vanished glory.

Let not our ruthless feet in anger trample
Their fragments in the dust,
But, weeping o'er them with a pity ample
Be to their weakness just.

O intellects that, void of human passion,
No tenderness may leaven,
Are ye, or the great hearts ye lay the lash on,
The nearest heaven ?

THE REAL *VERSUS* THE IDEAL.

Shall we mourn our idols fallen,
Pining for a lost ideal,
Finding what we risked our all on,
Not inanimate, but real?

No graven goddess, but a human
Soul, enlivened form of clay,
Just a lovely, loving woman—
Let us prize her while we may.

Let each beauteous trait or feature
Raise our adoration more,
For the Creator: but the creature
We may love but not adore.

LIFE.

Some souls are like a pool which, changeless ever
In placid mute content,
Reflects the self-same objects. For me never
uch stagnancy was meant.

My life is like a river, in whose waters
Still as they ripple past,
The face of Nature, and her sons and daughters
Are mirrored, changing fast.

Yet with the stream no drop of Lethe mingles :
Though image, image chase
Still from its depths, at will, my memory singles
Each scene, each form, each face.

Recalling clearly, not without emotion
Each fairest, happiest scene—
Till all, at length, shall mingle with the ocean
As it had never been.

No longer then in separate channel singled
Shall flow my selfish soul,
But, with its fellows merging, be co-mingled
In God's harmonious whole.

DEATH.

Is death the gate of bliss ?
Then tell me why
Those who believe all this
Fear so to die ?

Life is a malady
We but endure :
Shall we not welcome then
Death, its sole cure ?

Through the long day of toil
Striving our best,
When the sweet night is here
Shall we not rest ?

Huddle this clay away
Under the sod,
Let the caged spirit fly
Back to its God :

Only no dirges sing,
Weep not for me ;
Loud let the joy bells ring !
Now I am free !

TALES IN VERSE.

TALES IN VERSE.

WHICH IS MAUD?

A PROBLEM.

I.

Phil. Cameron sailed for Spain. With high hopes
nourished

Of future wealth, he crossed the stormy main.

A man of thrift, his enterprises flourished :

No lavish votary he in Pleasure's train.

His credit spread, his fortune kept amassing

Year after year, his wildest dreams surpassing.

Till a Señora's deep, dark, melancholy

Eyes, meeting his, enthralled him 'neath her sway,
Slave to a passion he had deemed a folly—

Like most wiseacres of the present day—

He won her. They were happy, I confess it ;

Naught marred their bliss but one thing. Can you
guess it ?

No little stranger came to change the sameness

Of a long *tête-à-tête* for many years :

And married life is wont to have a tameness

Unknown to courtship's April sun and tears :

Nor brightest eyes can make the days less dreary,

When, of each other, people have grown weary.

It chanced, one day, their chariot homeward wended
From a friend's house, where they had made a stay
Which should have been much longer ere it ended :

But Philip pleading, to his wife's dismay,
That urgent business needed his attention
(Though the particulars he did not mention),

Declined with thanks the extended invitation.

For Inez was too lavish—so he thought—
Of those bright orbs which won his admiration :
Flirted, in fact, more freely than she ought
With gay young gallants who their homage proffered :
And he was still so cross that when she offered

A charming kiss, with coldness he received it,
Chilling the love that he so feared to lose ;
For he had heard, and I'm afraid believed it,
That Spanish Donnas are too apt to choose—
Our dames, we know, still find one husband plenty—
As aide-de-camp, a Cavalier Servente.

It chanced then, as they drove on, Philip sleeping—
For now his Argus eyes had nought to do—
That Inez, looking from the window, weeping
Half at her spouse's coldness, partly too
Saddened to leave so suddenly and lightly
A house where she had made fresh conquests nightly,

Saw sitting by the wayside hot and dusty
A little maid who sobbed in childish grief.
She stopped the coachman, open forced the rusty
Door of the coach, and sprang to her relief.
“What is it, darling ?” Sobs the answer smother,
“I've lawt my way an tant det home to mother !”

“Where does your mother live?” “I don’t know
notting,

“I’ve lawt my way.” Then sobs with all her soul,
“I’ve lawt my way” is all she says, and putting
Her head in Inez’s lap, begins to roll
And lifts her little fists, and screams, and dashes
Fresh passionate tear-drops from the long black lashes.

They let her prattle on, they never stopped her:

“I’ve lawt my way,” still, parrot-like, she says.
Then Inez whispers—“Husband, let’s adopt her,
“She’ll be such comfort to me in the days
“When you are absent, soothe your ruffled spirit
“When you are vexed, and all our wealth inherit.”

“It is a pretty babe,” said he. “Well, Inez,

“Do as you like! Our home does want a child.”
Delightedly she smiled, rejoiced to win his

Consent, and pleased to find his mood more mild:
A husband’s coldness is so very hurting
To a wife’s feelings—when she has been flirting.

And the girl grew, and from the month they found her

They called the little laughing cherub, May.

No child was healthier, happier, or sounder:

The dull old house seemed sunnier day by day

And all its inmates loved her: there was never

A girl so good, affectionate and clever.

Within a year—O truth more strange than fiction,

Although some cynics may dispute the point—

Yet ’tis a fact beyond all contradiction,

May’s little nose was quite put out of joint,

And Inez bore her lord a bouncing daughter,

Whom they called Maud when to the font they brought
her.

But the long years brought no more olive branches
Until, one birthday, Maud was seventeen:
May's exact age we cannot state. It chanced
Such blooming girls Madrid did never see:
Accomplished too—they had the best of masters—
But now befell a series of disasters,

For Inez died. A matron much respected,
Mourned by her household and by all who knew
Her worth. Her husband lingered on dejected
A few short weeks: then to the grave he too
Departed, his last wishes, *in extenso*,
Confiding to a friend—one Don Lorenzo.

Maud was, of course, the heiress. A provision
Was made for May until she should be wed,
And for their future he made this decision
In his last sickness: that, when he was dead,
They should proceed to England, where his brother
Would act as guardian, Aunt Maria as mother.

II.

John Cameron had two sons, Arthur and Harry,
Comely and kind and generous youths were they,
And when they heard their cousins soon would tarry
Under their roof, their hearts grew warm for May.
Poor penniless May! When Arthur was preparing
Her plainly-furnished room, he, roused to daring,

Bought a rich carpet and a landscape. "Harry,"
Said he, "we'll gaily deck that room for May."
"You take the carpet, I'll the picture carry."
"So, shoulder arms! quick march! I'll lead the way."
But, ere they reached the door, their mother walked in,
And somewhat angry tones to them she talked in.

“What nonsense is all this, Artie and Harry ? ”—
 The matron, very wisely, wealth adored—
 “Learn, if you mean to fall in love, and marry
 “One of your cousins, that one must be Maud.
 “May must be taught to know her humble station :
 “Maud’s the fit object for your adoration.

“Had your Aunt Inez known how soon a daughter
 “Would grace her hearth, and make her household
 bright,
 “She never had adopted May, nor brought her
 “Home from the dusty road, the little fright !
 “May is, in fact, merely a sort of pensioner—
 “I wish your uncle’s letter didn’t mention her.”

The weeks flew round, and to the youths’ elation,
 The ship arrived which brought them home from Spain.
 The cousins, for whose happy installation
 Their kind endeavours were not all in vain.
 Maud’s room was gorgeous. May’s a neater symmetry
 Boasted, *distingue* in its lace and dimity.

Both dressed alike in mourning silks and laces,
 Both alike tall, no stranger could have told,
 Judging from their grand, beautiful, dark faces,
 Which maid was poor and which possessed of gold.
 You had been puzzled, too, if you had seen them,
 For there was not a pin to choose between them.

“Welcome, dear daughter of my sainted brother,”
 The uncle cried when they the mansion reach,
 “Maria will prove to you a second mother :
 “A kindly welcome, ladies, to you each—
 “My deep emotion I can scarcely smother—
 “Are you our darling Maud ? Is May the other ? ”

There was a pause, and a soft interchanging
Of loving glances 'twixt the damsels twain,
As if, in tacit thoughts, they were arranging
Who should reply. Then, lifting up again
Their graceful heads, one spoke, while tear-drops
glistened
Upon the lashes of the maid who listened.

“Both alike orphans, both alike bereaved,
“Nor Maud nor May, nor rich nor poor are we;
“On equal footing we would be received—
“My name is Rose, my sister’s Rosalie.
“Equal in fortune, as in joy or sorrow,
“As we have proved the past, we face the morrow.

Proudly erect, they still defied detection,
As who should say—Which hath the queenliest head,
The richer blood mantling the dark complexion,
The haughtier air, the more majestic tread,
Whose sparkling eye the deeper awe impresses,
Or whose the bluer blackness of the tresses?

Then said the puzzled uncle—“By the powers
“I’m nonplussed. Yet the speaker must be Maud,
“Walk you aside with her among the flowers;
“I’ll prove the other, and, mark you my word,
“I’ll find out all.” He led her to a settee,
And patted, fatherlike, the tresses jetty

Of Rosalie, who, sank in posture graceful,
Out-slid a little foot upon the stool.
Take care, old man! That little roguish face full
Of mischief hath ere this made many a fool.
“In Spain, Niece May,”—he rang and ordered food in—
“Maud studied music while you made the pudding.”

“ Pudding ! ” she echoed, ruby lips protruding
 To form a pout. “ ’Tis far too hot to eat,
 “ And far too much exertion to make ‘ pudding.’
 “ Enough to fan oneself in such a heat ;
 “ Or, to be fanned ” ; and here she shot an ogle
 Which put the querist’s brain in quite a boggle.

‘ That merry, side-long ogle did, in sooth, make
 A captive of him straight. He seized the fan.
 “ No ! that’s too fast ; the breeze will give me tooth-
 ache.
 “ And that’s too slow ! Was ever such a man ?
 “ That’s better, so ! just gently, softly cooling ;
 “ You’d make a gallant with a little schooling.

“ In Spain the servants do the household duties
 “ And young señoras do not soil their hands,
 “ In making pies. Besides, light wine and fruit is
 “ Much better suited to such fervid lands,
 “ But play and sing both Rose and I can, O !
 “ So nicely ! Have you got a good piano ? ”

But now, returned from the conservatory,
 The servant having luncheon served, and wine,
 Rose entered with her Aunt, in all the glory
 Of her grand beauty looking half divine
 In the grave splendour of her melancholy,
 Though Rosalie’s sparkling style was twice as jolly.

The Uncle whispered, “ I’ve the point decided—
 “ Since Maud must be the younger, this is she.
 “ She is so merry.” This his spouse derided :
 “ Nay, this is Maud who has been out with me,
 “ She’s quite the lady.” “ Well, the matter settle,
 “ This difficulty puts me on my mettle.”

III.

When first the cousins met, the youths enchanted
By the sweet bashful charms which met their view,
Found the delightful vision ever haunted
Their memory when at length the girls withdrew ;
Rosalie's comfort Arthur was intent on,
While Harry's loving gaze was ever bent on

Miss Rose. They both engrossed the girl's attention,
Among young dons their conquests were not few,
But as their whispering made flattering mention,
These handsome English lads were something new.
So the young damsels flirted, laughed and chattered,
By the youths' open admiration flattered.

And the girls sang a duet, where their voices
Mingled in harmony, which sweetly stole
Upon the senses. Such minstrelsy rejoices,
Charms, ravishes, and elevates the soul.
Then Rosalie trilled forth a simple ditty,
Though, from her lips, it sounded really pretty—

“ My eyes are bright, my heart is light,
My purse is heavy with gold,
Yet I am afraid I shall rest a maid
Until I have grown old.

“ Some would take me for beauty's sake,
Some would wed me for gold ;
Such love would die did beauty fly—
I will not be bought or sold.

“ But if I could find one who would
Love me for my true self,
I'd barter my dross nor feel the loss
For what care I for pelf ?

“ One who could screen no action mean,
A man of noble mind,
Who would, with might, defend the right,
Frank, loyal, brave and kind.

“ Oh! could I prove how I would love
Him, all my soul aglow,
If I but knew his love was true,
Or were he high or low.

“ Twere all the same, I'd yield my fame
Into his hands secure,
No taint of shame could spot the name
Of one whose love was pure.”

Then Rose's voice, trembling with deep emotion,
Smote in its rich, full melody, the ear
Like gentle heavings of a troubled ocean.
Full well she knew to woo the timid tear,
She sang, in fact, with sympathy and feeling,
A deep capacity for love revealing—

“ Dost fear the Future? If thy brave cheek blanches
Pale at the mystery of the dread To Be
Fear not, fear not, Life's changes and mischances
Shall bind me closer, O my Love, to thee.

“ The sky, so clear to-day, may cloud to-morrow—
Thyself forgot, dost tremble, Love, for me?
Trials but chasten, strengthen, and each sorrow
Shall bind me closer, O my Love, to thee.

“ When Calumny's foul dart thy soul oppresses,
Thinkst thou the venom'd shaft can poison me?
No, the world's scorn still more than its caresses
Shall bind me closer, O my Love, to thee.

“Should the days darken and severe afflictions
Close whelming o’er us, like a stormy sea,
Love shall transform them into benedictions
Binding me closer, O my Love, to thee.

“When wintry Age, in the long years’ revolving,
Shall speak in feeble tones of Fate’s decree :
The memories of Earth’s happiness, dissolving,
Shall bind me closer, O my Love, to thee.

“When from the trammels of this Life terrestrial,
The Glorifier, Death, shall set us free,
The pure expansion of a Love celestial
Shall find me closer, O my Love, to thee.”

But the days passed : nor Uncle John’s attention
Could solve the riddle nor the truth explain ;
Not even Aunt Maria’s sly invention—
She set her snares and little traps in vain ;
And the two sisters, in their fond affection,
Still kept their loving secret from detection.

“But from what source to get the information ? ”
Said John, “ They won’t betray themselves, ’tis plain.
“ They’re far too cautious in their conversation,
“ So we must try to get some clue from Spain.
“ The little baggages to bother men so !
“ I’ll write this very day to Don Lorenzo.”

IV.

Sweet innocent maiden, fancies pondering—
The Eastern sky yet red with morning’s flush—
Fair Rosalie was through the orchard wandering.
Rosalie’s fairy feet were wont to brush
The pearly dew. Her woe-worn lover followed :
With sleepless nights his eyes and cheeks were hollowed.

“O! Rosalie,” he cried, “have pity on me ;
 “You are my light, my love, my life, my all.
 “O! turn not thus those cruel eyes upon me,
 “They kill me. I must love whate’er befall ;
 “Have pity ! For I love you so immensely.”
 Just then she saw a tree whose boughs were densely

Loaded with cherries, and a ladder standing
 Against the trunk. Gladly she seized the chance
 Of refuge, fled, and ’mid the foliage landing,
 Concealed her blushes from his burning glance.
 This treatment only made the poor youth madder,
 He rushed towards the tree and seized the ladder.

“One short half-hour,” he said, “you’ve my permission
 “For cherries and reflection still to take,
 “Then I’ll release you but on one condition,
 “You tell me your decision, which will make
 “My life new leased, or leave me broken-hearted.”
 Then, shouldering the ladder, he departed.

Then, through the branches and the clustering cherries
 She sees her Aunt approach with Uncle John.
 Before the rustic bench beneath, he tarries,
 There seats his portly spouse, and putting on
 His gold-rimmed specs., that he may see the better,
 He breaks the seal of—

DON LORENZO’S LETTER.

Most worthy Señor,—I was pleased much
 Your writings to receive. To speak with you
 In person would have pleased me much more,
 For I was much enamoured of your brother.
 The task you set me is a little hard ;
 I have been long a victim to old age,
 Which creeps upon me fast. My sight is dim,
 And did you send me portraits of the girls

I could not see their faces. To describe
 Is much more difficult. Who shall describe
 The angels or say which most angelest?
 I know to be with them was like to be
 In sunshine. But a little story
 I'll tell you from which, perchance, you may
 Learn the Señora's characters. I was once
 The evening at your brother's, and we drank
 Some coffee. There were bubbles in May's cup.
 Now nurses say bubbles are signs of wealth.
 "I shall be rich!" cried May, and clapped her hands;
 "O! if each bubble prove a thousand roubles
 "How many should I have? Count, Don Lorenzo."
 I stooped and feebly set my dim old eyes
 Counting to please her, when a sudden pat
 Upon my back made me to start, for I
 Am very nervous, and the cup upset.
 "There goes your fortune and your coffee, May,"
 Said Maud; "Weep not, for you shall have half mine."
 And so they shared Maud's cup. Now can you tell
 Which maid is which? I could relate to you
 A dozen of such little tales as these
 Only to make you think they both are angels.
 But I can give to you no other clue,
 They were much like, and to my filmy eyes
 They were as one. Greet to them both from me
 I mourn them much, but shall not mourn them long
 I go where we shall meet—

Receive, etc.,

"Now here," cried Uncle John, "at last I've spelt him
 "All through, and yet we are no nearer Maud.
 "Yet I would swear that little blow was dealt him—
 (A cherry hit him here) "Upon my word,
 "I think it rains—by Rosalie, I flatter—"
 (More cherries) "Really it begins to patter."

Then as their footsteps fainter on the gravel
 Sounded and died, poor Arthur came again
 In anxious mood, his fortune to unravel:
 His features sharpened with protracted pain
 Of long suspense, his nervous fingers working,
 And all his muscles twitching, quivering, jerking.

“Listen,” said she, “the post has brought a letter
 “Bearing the Spanish mark, to Uncle John.
 “Before you act too rashly, you had better
 “See how much happiness you may count on—
 “If I have fortune or I have not any:
 “I may be May, and so, not worth a penny.”

“May you be May!” he cried, “I’ll be delighted.
 “But be you May or Maud, or Maud or May,
 “I care not for your gold. I want your bright-eyed
 “Delicious self. I will not go away
 “Till you have given an answer which shall fill me
 “With life-long ecstasy, or quickly kill me.”

He reads no death-stroke in the liquid glances
 Of the dark orbs which meet his upward gaze:
 No hard fate in the blush which so enhances
 Her red cheeks’ glow. With all his soul ablaze
 He stretches amorous arms up to receive her,
 And vows he never, never will deceive her.

She rests her head upon his breast, concealing
 The deep blush mantling on her olive cheek,
 And then looks up, a glowing love revealing,
 She dare not trust those ruby lips to speak.
 The vows he utters as he stoops to meet them
 We’ll leave, ’twould take some stanzas to repeat them.

And when to Rose a fluttering confession
Of her great happiness she, timid, made,
And learnt that Harry asked a like concession
From Rose herself ; she cried, “ Oh, I’m so glad !
“ That darling Harry. Dear, you shan’t refuse him,
“ If Arthur had not got me, I would choose him.”

Then as two loving pairs knelt down before him,
John Cameron blessed them, with abundant tears,
And a great gushing tenderness came o’er him—
“ May Heaven make you happy, my sweet dears !
“ As for the fortune—well, you shall divide it ;
“ Could Philip speak I’m sure he’d so decide it.’

THE VENGEANCE OF ESTELLE.

I.

Soft zephyrs, which tempered the sun's ardent heat,
Wafted our craft to a fairy-like glade:
A cool, flower-bespangled, delicious retreat,
Where a veteran oak spread its bountiful shade.

By the cool fragrance charmed, and the silence around,
We decided to furl the white wings of our craft,
And sprang, with adventurous footsteps, aground,
Admired the fair prospect, and merrily laughed.

But the brightest of visions my eyesight embraced
Was my darling Estelle in white *mousselin-de-laine*,
On the cloth's snowy damask, while deftly she placed
The chicken, the salad, the sparkling champagne.

Then reclining chin deep in the moss covered bank,
In an amorous indolence naught can explain,
We ate, and we sang, and we laughed, and we drank,
While the waterfall murmured its constant refrain.

How sweet to recline by a rippling stream
In the innocent arms of the girl you adore,
And, forgetful of swift-footed summers, to dream
Of the joyous existence of childhood once more.

For were we not children? Just truants from school—
From the school of the world, with its envy and pain:
Where the turbulent scholars, the dupe, knave, and fool,
Still struggle ambitiously prizes to gain.

My part in the struggle some weeks was delayed :
For I was high priest in a temple of gold,
Where the root of all evil was treasured and weighed,
And I hated the Mammon with hatred untold.

So I fled with my darling Estelle from the din
Of the counting-house barter, and bustle, and moil :
Where the gold merchant metes out the wages of sin
Side by side with the pittance of honester toil.

And Estelle was a slave of the marvellous art
That fetters the passions in magical bands,
That makes the crowd throb like a sensitive heart,
And wins the applause of its myriad hands.

She had fled from the scene of her triumph in haste,
From the nightly excitement and praise of the crowd,
In the blest calm of Nature pure pleasures to taste
With the zest of a temperament richly endowed.

And I swore that my passion should cease but with life,
As I gazed on my darling in jubilant pride—
Did the Law and the Churchman pronounce her my wife,
Would the bond of our union be stronger? I sighed.

For I feared lest the spirits which rose in the air,
Grown envious of bliss so transcendant and warm,
A joy so ecstatic might strive to impair—
Might tear us asunder, or do us a harm.

And still as I gazed a dark shadow then fell,
While the rising breeze threatened a storm would
begin :
So we left, with reluctance, our nook in the dell,
And I hastily rowed to the sheltering inn.

II.

The thunder was hushed. From the damp earth evoked
A beautiful freshness and fragrance were there:
While the choice cigarette which I pensively smoked
Perfumed, with its incense, the evening air.

And my darling Estelle, as she sat at my feet,
Gazed up with her soulful blue eyes into mine,
And I sighed—Why two hearts which responsively beat
Should ever be parted, I cannot divine.

And still, as I sighed, the light rays of the sun
Illumed with its glory her tresses of gold,
And the thrill of her glance made me sure I had won
A wealth of affection no words could unfold.

“My Love and my Light, my sweet Day-star,” I said,
“Will you tell me the reason you may not be mine?
“I know you have vowed that you never will wed,
“Yet such fond superstition, I conjure you, resign.”

“I am yours altogether,” she cried, “as your friend,
“Your mistress, your slave! Pray, what would you
have more?

“I love the world’s blandishments but to the end
“An offering more worthy at your feet to pour.

“Yet to wed you—O, press me not! For I would save
“From Destiny’s blemish your yet spotless name.
“Though guiltless, believe me the secret I have
“Bears with it a burden of sin and of shame.”

Then I begged of her, should it not pain her too much,
To allow me to judge if it yet were too late
To avert—since she feared that the portents were such—
To avert the dire evils foreshadowed by Fate.

"'Tis but right," owned Estelle, "that my life you should know—

"I'll weary you, dearest, the least that I can."
And while, in the heavens, faint shone the far bow
She drew close to my side and her story began.

III.

We were two sisters in the grand old home
In which I lived 'ere I began to roam.
I had most wit they said. The meeker grace,
The comlier figure, and the fairer face
Were hers. My sterner, haughtier mien,
Gained me the soubriquet of Tragic Queen :
While the soft, mild, bewitching air of Mary,
Earned her the sweeter name of Little Fairy.

Now it befell, one merry Christmastide,
My father's generous gates were opened wide
To a long train of happy, honored guests :
But, as the object of my tale requests
That I describe but one, I'll cry a truce to
All further catalogue, and introduce you
To him at once. Hugh Laurence was his name,
Noble in feature, with a supple frame
Divinely formed to charm and to command.
'Twas said that where he wooed none could withstand
His beauty, and the fascinating craft
Of manner, when he spoke, or sang or laughed.
As customary with brethren of his art,
His face was smoothly shaved : yet, when apart
From the stage world he moved, he ever wore
Small false moustachios which became him more
Than I have power to tell. You cannot guess
How much they mutely aided to express

The sentiments which the sweet voice conveyed.
His every movement studied, pondered, weighed,
Added a mystic, magic eloquence
Which gave a deeper charm, a finer sense,
To words quite trivial when another spoke.
Thus when he made some merry flippant joke
He twirled the silky playthings towards his eyes.
Now in an upward curled moustache there lies
A certain *j'è ne sais quoi* of vivacity
When held in place by fixature's tenacity.
But when a graver theme engrossed his speech,
And his deep pathos strove the heart to reach,
The silky fringe, smoothed by the taper tips
Of his white palm, fell pendent o'er the lips,
And the bright face, a moment since so jolly,
Assumed an air of pensive melancholy.
The chiefest star which graced the city's stage
His varied talent made him quite the rage,
His was the craft to mimic to the life
The traits with which humanity is rife :
No salaried servant of the art he loved,
His sole reward was to be well approved.
Enough, he was an actor, and, to aid
The pleasure of the throng of which he made
The life and ornament, he quickly built,
By aid of carpenters, then decked and gilt
And set with scenes, a stage, and used his skill
With patient tact and winning art, to drill
Our uncouth movements to a defter grace :
Taught us each cunning trick of limb and face,
Each finer shade of feeling to express—
To modulate the voice to tenderness,
And raise it high in tragic declamation,
Or give a finer point to conversation.
All stricter etiquette was thrown aside
And mutual emulation softened pride,

And taught us soon all jealousy to smother,
And, if we would succeed, to aid each other.
Then, funny scenes occurring at rehearsal
Small comic contretemps, served to reverse all
Ideas of prudent coyness and propriety
Which girls are taught who move in good society.
I have not time to enter on detail,
Yet such free intercourse could scarcely fail
To favor love, and thus to raise the latch
To Hymen's door, and farther many a match,
For Cupids in all green rooms surely hover.
And still in every love scene Hugh was lover
And Mary was his mistress. Once he played
The Romeo to her Juliet, and betrayed
A passion that surpassed all simulation :
The words but spoke his genuine admiration.
His kiss, bestowed in no mere actor fashion,
And every gesture spoke his burning passion.
All this I saw, and yet I did not say
A word to Mary, sure she would not stray :
Besides not wishing to seem too strait-laced.
Alas ! my confidence was all misplaced.

I did not play at first. Yet one great bill
Included me. Nay, laugh, if laugh you will
At my ambition, yet 'tis really true
As Lady Macbeth I made my *début*,
And all spectators spoke in admiration
Of what they called my "grand impersonation."
"Indeed !" laughed Hugh, "'twas acted to the life ;
" Woe be to him who gets Estelle for wife
" To live with him for better or for worse,
" For the grey mare will prove the better horse."

Thus, unperceived, the merry days flew past
Till our small company broke up at last,

And Hugh, departing, said it was a shame
I did not grace the stage, and rise to fame.

Now I, to make my story plain, must say
That Mary's hand long since was given away
To a rich kinsman, one Sir Lionel.
A handsome youth was he ; she liked him well,
He loved her with a passion deep and strong :
'Twas understood that they should wed 'ere long.
But my poor Mary, as the swift months flew,
The consequence of guilty love for Hugh
No longer could conceal. This to the brink
Of frenzy wrought her. " What would Lionel think.
" Woe me," she cried. " Unhappy and undone,
" My young hopes withered and my fair fame gone."
" Nay, dear," I cried, " I'll aid you to conceal it,
" 'Twould kill or drive him mad should we reveal it."
So I feigned sickness, and still growing worse
Claimed Mary's close attendance as my nurse :
And a young surgeon we had known from youth,
A heart of steel, was trusted with the truth.
When the time came and she was brought to bed,
I gathered up the new-born babe, and fled.
For I was wearied of the calm, still life
Of our dull home, and long to face the strife
Of the great world. I had been long intent
On some such chance to give my impulse vent,
Urged by a grand enthusiastic rage
To air my talents on the public stage ;
Burst from the dull restraint of social laws,
And taste the pleasures of the world's applause.

Conceive my joy. After some weeks I read in
The public prints of Mary's happy wedding.

For months I studied. Schooled my tongue and eye,
And all my members to the living lie—

To simulate, as best becomes the mime,
The noblest action and the basest crime—
Hatred, revenge, love, scorn and vanity,
And all the passions which possess humanity—
Learnt how to breathe the soft pathetic sigh :
To weep false tears, to rant, and rave, and die—
With sudden transformations still to shew
Transports of joy and depths of abject woe.
All this I learnt—I'm sure I don't know how—
Till I became, what you behold me now,
The pampered favorite of the lavish town,
Possessed of wealth, and homage, and renown.

IV.

She ceased. And I said, "Though your story be told,
"The hope of our union I will not resign,
"In your record of action no shame I behold,
"Only love, and a self-abnegation divine."

But she said, "Woe is me! The stern finger of Fate
"Points out a fixed purpose I dare not forego :
"I have sworn to be loyal to Vengeance and Hate,
"A Nemesis ruthlessly tracking my foe.

"For years I have toiled, and have garnered my gold,
"To fulfil the dire mission I've ever in view
"The fiend in my toils to ensnare and enfold :
"To my poor little Mary's wrecked innocence true.

"I will seek him abroad where he roams in his pride—
"Relentlessly seek him—I know we shall meet :
"I would find him were this little world e'er so wide,
"First ruin him, then strike him dead at my feet."

I argued no more. 'Twas in vain to say Fate
And Nemesis are but the One high above :
She hated poor Hugh as but woman can hate,
And she loved me as only a woman can love.

And skilled in the magic which coquetry's art
Alone to the transports of passion can lend,
She contrived day by day, some new joy to impart,
Till our blissful vacation grew near to its end.

Until merciless Time sternly summoned us back
To the Babel and stir of the City's great mart :
In the service of Mammon my being to wrack,
While she went to the less irksome shrine of her Art.

V.

One day the Temple of the buskined Muse
Put forth a placard, which proclaimed at night
A star of highest magnitude would use
The boards, and delectate the public sight.

He came. The house was crammed. The curtain rose
Stately and slow as curtains ought to rise.
The play told of a certain Czar who chose
To move among his subjects in disguise.

That in this mode he best might learn to know
Where probity, and where dishonor, lay :
Where he should let the tide of favor flow,
Virtue protect, and villainy betray :

Thus, a poor traveller, once he found his way,
Disguised in a large cloak and grisly beard,
To a small inn whereat he made some stay
To take refreshment, and there overheard

How a rich noble pressed dishonest suit
On a fair peasant, promising great dower :
And how her better nature still was mute
Because her father stood within his power.

Enough. The details of the plot we'll leave
And hasten to its end the little play,
Where the rich noble, who would thus deceive
The passive maiden, finds to his dismay

That the poor traveller, stripped of his disguise,
Becomes his potent judge, the mighty Czar.
Tableau ! Vice baffled : as 'tis ever wise
That vice should be in plays. But, ah !

That look of dazed surprise on Stella's face,
That is no counterfeit—no stage display,
Though the charmed crowd the moment fast embrace
To give their vast approval noisy play.

The truth was, as I will at once unfold,
'Twas told by her to me, by me to you,
That Stella saw thus near, with joy untold,
Her present foe, her future victim—Hugh.

'Twas years since he had seen her, as you know,
And then one sister was much like the other.
Like the blue eyes, the tresses golden glow—
Both were the image of their sainted mother.

He thought 'twas Mary driven from her home,
Thence exiled by some proof of guilty love,
Doomed by her kindred the wide world to roam
Till Heaven, in pity, summoned her above.

She did not undeceive him, and she feigned
She loved him. Still, she stammered, he must give
The shock—her nerves—brief respite, ere she deigned
In the old intimacy with him to live.

And still she wooed him with each blandishment,
And each coquettish trick her art had taught,
Yet still was coy, and thus—'twas her intent—
His passion to the height of frenzy wrought.

Then with the pathos which was wont to draw
From every eye the sympathetic tear,
Sickness she feigned. The fevered flush he saw,
The stifled cough smote on his pitying ear.

And when he urged immediate change of air
Among fair Switzerland's majestic scenes,
She faintly sighed, "Thither I would repair,"
Demurely blushed, and hinted—lack of means.

Thus from her enemy his gold she lures—
For he was ever careless of his wealth—
"Take what you will," he cried, "my fortune's yours,
"Well spent, indeed, if it procure you health."

Around his neck she linked her ivory arms,
Then sweetly smiled and cried, "My god-like Hugh!"
While her cheeks' varying flush enhanced her charms—
"Heaven do to you as you to others do!

"But in your mercy give me peace awhile—
"Star in the provinces as you propose:
"With your loved art the lingering hours beguile,
"Join me abroad when your engagements close

"Meanwhile, fair Nature's magic, calm repose,
"Shall lull my too excited nerves to rest:
"When next your loving arms around me close
"I'll look, I promise you, my very best,

"Be well and strong, and then"—an opportune
Cough stopped, with hacking paroxysm, her breath;
But her eyes' glance which did with his commune
Finished the sentence thus: "Be yours till death."

VI.

We were roving together, my Stella and I,
In the land of the hunter, the chamois, the chalet,
Where shadowed by mountains and glaciers, lie
The calm and repose of each beautiful valley.

Content in the sun of her favor to bask,
I strove to be happy. I knew it was vain
The cause of her strange, mental sickness to ask,
To fathom a mystery she would not explain.

At times she would sit in absorbed speculation,
Her vacant eyes fixed on the vale from above :
At times she would clasp me with strange, wild elation,
And overwhelm me with kisses of rapturous love.

Till one day she asked me to leave her. "To-night
"You must not think me selfish," she said with a smile.
"But I really have so many letters to write
"That indeed you must leave me alone for a while.

"So meet me to-morrow at ten, when to start
"For England my measures shall all be prepared,
"Though I own that it is with reluctance I part
"From scenes where our happiest hours have been
shared."

VII.

I did not know Hugh should arrive that day.
They supped together. Never till that hour
Estelle had seemed so beautiful and gay—
Her magic charms so conscious of their power.

Deeply she pledged him in the sparkling cup,
Then waywardly she looked toward the skies :
"The moon is high," she cried, "let's clamber up
"The rocky heights and watch the sun arise.

"Such a romance! we two. If you'll confide
 "Yourself to me." Kissing, he stopped her breath
 And spoke a pretty sentiment: "My guide
 "Is Mary's slightest wish, in life and death."

Athwart the little inn's soft grass-plot soon
 They passed, and none was witness of their flight
 Save the pale beams of the fast-fading moon
 That on their mountain pathway shed her light.

And thus, by aid of trusty alpenstock
 They reached a rugged, overhanging cliff,
 Which Stella, jesting, named the Tarpeian Rock,
 And all around seemed a chaotic myth.

"How terrible," Estelle said, as she hung
 Upon Hugh's shoulder, "to be hurled from hence."
 And as she, shrinking, closer to him clung,
 The distant rocks, re-echoing, whispered "Hence."

She gave a little shudder, paused, at length
 Erect, resumed, "To fall as Satan fell,
 "Hurled down from heaven. Thus! thus!"—With all
 her strength
 She launched him—"Learn the vengeance of Estelle!"

One terrible glance of horror and amaze
 Shot o'er his shoulder, reached her as he fell.
 While on the black abyss she fixed her gaze,
 The rocks re-echoed, "Vengeance!" and "Estelle!"

DRIFTING.

There is a village. Give your kind attention
To this one fact. I dare not tell its name,
Such small particulars I must not mention
Lest I incur the gentle Public's blame :
For once a courteous Editor refused
A pretty story from my pen to print,
Saying that confidence had been abused
By telling plainly things I should but hint.
This much by way of preface, my progression
Henceforth shall smoothly run, and *sans* digression.

O, lovely village in the smiling valley !
How vividly again the writer sees,
As childish memories thick around him rally ;
The sanded roads shadowed by veteran trees,
The gleaming white-washed cots the hillside dotting,
The golden crops, the kine-flecked pasture land,
The village green where the old stocks lie rotting,
The spreading park where stalwart oak trees stand,
The quaint churchyard with large type epitaphs
Which he who runs may read, and reading, laughs.

O, moss-grown church ! O, pews with green-baize
lining

Whose lofty panels screened each gaze but one
(The droning parson's), where oiled heads reclining
Left stains which soon turned yellow in the sun.
O, dreary sermons ! Texts and common-places
Delivered in a dreary monotone,
To a calm sea of placid, sleeping faces,
And teaching—works ignoring—faith alone.
O, nodding clerk ! who woke just now and then
To point the periods with a loud " Amen."

Peace to your ashes ! For a generation
 Has risen, by God's providence, since then—
 Perhaps to the general welfare of the nation,
 For these are wiser, if not better men.
 And everywhere are met increasing traces
 Of progress, with its civilising sway :
 The rushing train the lagging coach replaces,
 And letters are delivered twice a day ;
 And snorting iron steeds whose breath is steam,
 Usurp, at plough, the farmer's docile team.

And the new Vicar is an eye-glassed dandy,
 Whose perfumed cambric doth like incense smell—
 Curled is his hair and curled his whiskers sandy—
 Talks glib of Heaven but scarcely whispers H—l.
 In bold effrontery modern pews are standing,
 Elaborately grained in polished rows :
 Where village belles the rustic gaze commanding,
 No longer close their eyes but eye the clothes.
 And Niobes with urns bespeak our sigh
 For the good dead. Where do the wicked lie ?

The village squire now figures in our story.
 No keener sportsman ever rode to hounds :
 His hair, long grizzled, was now growing hoary,
 Red was his face, his favorite oath was " Zounds !"
 He and his spouse were famous for their bounty—
 No beggar turned, unaided, from their door—
 None was more widely honored in the county,
 Beloved by high and low, by rich and poor :
 Yet none with sterner air enforced the laws
 When poachers, tramps, or vulpicides gave cause.

Three sons he had, types of the world's three classes :
 For Jack was knave, Dick dupe, and Tom a fool.
 As many daughters : bonny, buxom lasses,
 The brightest ornaments of the Miss Bee's school.

They all, long since, have married. Of the brothers
Each his true character has acted out—
Dick has been ruined, Jack has ruined others
And died at last, a brutal, drunken lout ;
While foolish Tom seems somehow linked by Fate
To Miss Bee's sunny little sister Kate.

Miss Bee, a pattern of severe austerity,
A sour, strong-minded, strictly virtuous maid
With childhood's satire-loving, free temerity,
Her scholars would have mocked, but were afraid.
She taught the solid matters and deportment,
Morals—religion—on her aid relied ;
While smiling Ada, nature, as she thought, meant
With arts more trivial to be occupied.
O'er music, French, and drawing she presided,
And these she taught with a success decided.

And the third sister, Kate, was monitor,
And thus was meant to be a sort of spy.
If any *mal y pense*, then may be *honi soit*,
For the soft dew sprang ever to her eye
If her report gave cause for punishment,
And oft to screen her little faults she'd try,
To some great gawky penitent's astonishment ;
And thus she ruled by love. To hear her sigh,
Was to the culprit a reproach more moving
Than Miss Bee's lecturing, frowning, and reproofing.

And Katey Bee, of the Squire's eldest daughter
Was aye the bosom friend. Full oft the bright-eye'd
fawn
Fled startled by their peals of merry laughter,
As the girls wandered, handed, o'er the lawn.
And sometimes Tom was with them ; but more often
Through the weird, shadowy park at eventide,

The shrinking terrors of the way to soften,
He led her home, and still her fears would chide ;
And thus the love commenced in childish purity,
Grew with their growth, ripened with their maturity.

Then Tom was sent to school, and learnt to call
His father "Guv'nor," and his trousers "bags ;"
To gamble, smoke, and swear, and play at football,
To fag himself and thrash the other fags.
And as he was a manly sort of fellow,

Was either loved or feared by great and small,
In whose defence he made the coward bellow.

His studies, though, did not progress at all,
And though the clever lent him their assistance,
His brain, to Latin, shewed a stern resistance.

And in his absence Kate was very lonely,
And the long school-hours nearly drove her mad,
While thought of him was in recess the only
Pastime, and the one solace that she had.
But when he wrote, it formed her chiefest pleasure
To hear his sister read her, line by line,
His letters ; that each sentence she might treasure,
Embalming it in her heart's inmost shrine,
And in the long wakeful night-hours, dark and dreary,
Their repetition made the time less weary.

But when he came again in the vacation,
The faded roses bloomed upon her cheeks,
And all her being beamed in glad ovation,
That well repaid his absence cruel weeks.
She loved him through that happy age of childhood
When he, but jesting, called her " Little wife,"
Teasing, caressing, kissing in his wild mood,
Which was but play to him, but formed her life.
Thus the years passed in varying shade and joy,
Till Tom—school finished—seemed no more a boy.

Then followed halcyon days when nought resisted
Their true love in its happy interchange,
To Kate it seemed she never had existed ;
Her life had now a freer, wider range.
In fact, they loved each other very madly,
Though Kate was very virtuous and coy.
Which, since they both were penniless, most sadly
Perplexed and exercised the headstrong boy
Who, too good-natured for to hurt or harry her,
Resolved, in spite of all the world, to marry her.

So one fine day Tom spurred exasperate
To a young curate who was just ordained.
“ Help me, old man, my case is desperate,”
Quickly to him the matter he explained,—
“ Fear not to wed us. Should our friends discover
“ It then will be too late not to forgive
“ When I am Katey’s husband, not her lover,
“ Else I can’t answer for what may arrive.”
Thus far, you see, he acted as he should,
Tom, like most fools, was naturally good.

But soon aroused the good old squire’s displeasure
To see the stripling wasting, like a lout
In trivial sports, whole weeks and months of leisure.
And so, one day, he searched and sifted out
A merchant’s card, to whom he wrote a letter—
He lived somewhere near Pekin or Hong Kong—
Asking his aid to employ the rascal better ;
Appealing to their youthful friendship strong.
And Tom was forthwith shipped across the seas
To learn the curious art of tasting teas.

Then came the bitter sweet of separation ;
To Kate the world had lately seemed so fair,
Love makes of woman’s life a long ovation,
Once lost, leaves nothing but a blank despair.

Man's nature seldom knows so deep a sorrow,
Young men especially have little care,
Vow constancy to-day and flirt to-morrow.

Tom was soon sighing for a little pair
Of Chinese feet—for feet six inches measure
In China—and forgot his English treasure.

But Tom grew tired of eating rice with chopsticks

Dining off bird's-nest soup and puppy dogs ;
Could neither feast his stomach nor his optics

On fricassees of mice or long-legged frogs ;
Besides he and the Merchant didn't hit it,

For he was harsh, and Tom a fiery lad,
His duty would forget or else omit it

And seemed, when he was scolded, rather glad.
They had a quarrel, Tom was most abusive,
The Merchant's wish to train him proved illusive.

“ He would not have his counting house polluted

“ By such a headstrong, useless, idle dolt.”

The idle dolt straight wished him better suited

Then quickly packed his traps and made a bolt.
Thus were his father's words fulfilled, who, sneering,

Was wont to call his son a drifting lout,
Unstable at each gust of temper veering,

Only half knowing what he was about.
Lout like, he drifted outward o'er the main,
And now he drifted lout like home again.

It chanced there was on board a wealthy, stately

Lady, who moved imperious 'mid the crowd,
Polish by birth, and of her husband lately

Bereft, and like all Polish women proud,
And gifted with that innate natural royalty

Which, as its lawful tribute, doth exact
That all men shall obey with cringing loyalty

The laws its slightest wishes may enact—

A being gifted with so grand a beauty
That humblest homage seemed a stringent duty.

Blueblack her hair, a fringe of long dark lashes
Veiled the soft dreaming depths of her great eyes,
Whence shot, at times, glances like lightning flashes
Which, vanquishing the foolish, warned the wise.
Yet all confessed her power with great sincerity,
Nor he who dared resist might long survive,
But fell a victim to his own temerity.
Fly Beauty if you will, but do not strive,
Vain stoic, to defy its domination :
First comes defeat and then extermination.

She had one child, a daughter. Only seven
The mother said, yet I am sure I've seen—
She must have been at any rate eleven—
Some girls who were no bigger at fourteen.
She dressed her in such very childish fashion—
A style which threatened soon to be immodest—
Sometimes the girl would burst into a passion.
She somehow seemed uncomfortably boddiced,
Yet doubtless to extremes 'twould not be carried
When once the mother was securely married.

At length her passionate malady grew serious,
As through the burning zones the good ship sped
Her queenly charms majestic and imperious
Commanded Tom to love her, and he did.
One sultry night when moonbeams bathed in ocean
Their fervid lips first snatched the hasty bliss ;
He was not slow to second her emotion,
Yet I believe 'twas she bestowed the kiss.
Women, magnanimous past all believing,
Are still more blest in giving than receiving.

But Tom was soon embarrassed to discover—
And when we speak thus quaintly do not start,

Since he was wooed the lady played the lover—
 Most honorable intentions on her part.
 She issued a decree that he should marry
 Her regal self, and purposed to instal
 Him master of—without unneedful tarry—
 Her wealth and country mansion, Morley Hall.
 To hear was to obey. What made his conquest lighter
 Was that his present prospects were not brighter,

And to secure a fortune seemed judicious.
 He named the day, and as they chanced to find
 A chaplain sent on board by fate propitious,
 And both were old enough to know their mind,
 He willingly performed the ceremony,
 The captain acting as the bride's papa,
 And when a wag said, "He would bet his money
 "That she was older than the lad's mamma,"
 A graver comrade bade him cease his chatter
 'Twas plainly quite a love match, so what matter.

Tom was, we know, a sturdy, handsome fellow
 With curling locks and sparkling violet eyes.
 Her spouse had been a blasé roué, yellow
 With jungle fever caught 'neath tropic skies :
 And German Goethe tells us there were plenty
 Such instances when he was yet alive,
 Where the fresh charms of virile two-and-twenty,
 Attracted those of amorous thirty-five.
 When female tastes, bereft of virgin purity,
 Acquire a sensual zest from sheer maturity.

Now German Goethe does not say how lasting
 The *Wunderliche Neigungen* were he speaks of :
 But I should say, Not very. This contrasting
 Of ages is among the wildest freaks of
 Blind Cupid. Thus after some months of honey
 The lady finds, dismayed, the youth grow cold,

That her caresses are less prized than money,
For widow's blandishments are always bold;
Cannot compare with the soft shrinking charms
Of those less used to conquer love's alarms.

Shortly it struck her that her little daughter
Shewed an intelligence beyond her years (?)
Which craved for good tuition, so bethought her
To advertise—despite her darling's tears.

Some dozen answers lay upon the table,
She asked her husband, "Can you choose for me
"Which to reply to? For I am not able."

He scans them carefully enough to see
That one is penned in a neat, well-known writing,
And while with it his favourite meerschaum lighting

He notes the sheet, in its death-writhings turning,
Reveals the signature of Katherine Bee.

"This governess won't do. Excuse my burning

"The angular letters, lady-like and wee."

"And why not, pray?" "Spells 'umble with an 'h' in."

"That's right, you goose!" "Well then, I cannot
choose.

"Here, this one's Irish, so don't set her taching.

"Give me, for pipe-lights, those which you refuse."

Then he strolled forth to hide his agitation,
And left his wife to make her approbation.

Then off he saunters, whistling, to the stable

To hear the bulletins about the horses,
And gives his groom advice most admirable,

While with his fork the yellow straw he tosses:
Looks to the hunter's back, the cartmare's spavin,

And hears Black Bess is somehow off her feed,
And finds her feverish, so talks of having

The veterinary-surgeon round to bleed.

Tom's brain was keener far in doctoring cattle
Than in a deep argumentative battle.

One forenoon, as that ill-conditioned mortal
 Sauntered, low whistling, down the avenue,
 Scarce had he passed the lodge's sacred portal
 Before a female floated into view,
 And the bright sun which glinted on his barrel
 Illumed her softly, like a pictured saint—
 Fell chequered, gleaming in her white apparel
 In rays the dusky foliage rendered faint,
 And a strange instinct, which he could not name,
 Warned him to shun her 'ere she nearer came.

Her golden tresses in the sun resplendent
 Shone, halo-like, around the pallid brow,
 While from her arm the ribboned hat fell pendent.
 Onward she glided, spirit-like and slow,
 Till a gruff voice cried from behind the fences,
 "Be you the guv'ness gal? Be'est gwine t' hall?"
 Startled, she paused; then firm controlled her senses,
 "Yes, I was going," she faltered faint and small.
 The gruff voice answered to her dire dismay,
 "Then 'taint no use. The place be guv' away."

"You're quite, quite sure?" "Yes, I be sure and sartain,
 "The grum be druv t'meet t'gal at t'mail.
 "'T be gospul true, sure as my name be Martin."
 She raised her thin hands with a low sad wail,
 "Too late!" she sighed with sad, low intonation.
 "Father in Heaven, Thy cruel will be done!"
 Then her head sank in silent resignation,
 Though from her eyes despairing tears would run.
 Meekly she turned and glided off in sorrow.
 That sad face haunted Tom for many a bitter morrow,

Ghostlike pursued him and his spirits daunted,
 He sought oblivion in the flowing bowl,
 Burst from his wife's allegiance disenchanted,
 While furies wrought within his wretched soul.

And jealous ire to find her charms deserted
Enraged and sorely piqued his queenly spouse ;
In reckless spite she desperately flirted
With the wild friends with whom he filled the house :
With Driver, Spanker, Devilton, and Harrison,
And all the licensed butchers of the garrison.

Dissolute revels, limitless expansion,
Turned day and night into one noisy rout :
Shook the old walls and turrets of the mansion,
And oftentimes the wild hilarious shout
Startled the stillness of the Sabbath morn,
And pious village beldames sighed and knew,
As, book in hand, churchward they crossed the lawn,
“ It was the mad squire and his crazy crew.”
With reckless haste the host his fortune squandered,
He never paused nor consequences pondered.

One night all slept, yet two prolong the orgies
For Tom and Devilton the dice still ply,
Till the mad host one last huge stake disgorges
And springs up ruined, with a hideous cry.
Then Devilton's face gleamed with a wild distortion,
His white teeth glittering 'neath their fringe of jet.
“ Tis true that I have won your land and fortune ;
“ But, my dear boy, you are not ruined yet.
“ Three things are yours. One is your beauteous wife ;
“ The other two—your honor, and your life.”

Some men the taunt, so insolent and cruel,
Had roused to instant vengeance, or to strife :
Tom was no coward, yet to fight a duel
Seemed playing pitch and toss with human life.
“ If honor's lost, yet still my life I value,”
And at his mad idea his face grew pale ;
“ But for the rest, my beauteous hag I'll sell you
“ For a cool thousand down upon the nail.

"You have her fortune; *she's* within your power;
"I'll not molest you till my dying hour."

Then swift fled Tom, furies more swift pursuing
To the weird splendors of the far Kursaal,
And there, once more, the Fickle Goddess wooing,
Staked what he had, and quickly lost the whole.
The ruined gamester's mad delirium followed;
He staggered, pale and cursing, to his feet—
A goblet's fiery draught he fiercely swallowed—
Rushed in despair's dire transport to the street.
Without raged lightnings flash and thunder's din;
But it was nothing to the storm within.

Above the wind's wild howl and rain storm's patter
Rang the four-footed gallop of a steed;
Which rushed, with sobbing breath and headlong clatter,
Urged by the lightning flash to terror's speed.
Impending death his gloomy conscience gladdened—
Despair lifts courage to a height superb—
Tom's brain, besides, was by excitement maddened,
He snatched a rein—by good luck 'twas the curb.
The beast reared, then fell snorting on its haunches,
And in Tom's arms its lifeless burden launches.

But then, recovering with some desperate lunges,
Its huge iron hoof fell thundering on his foot,
While flaming sparks fly at its desperate plunges,
And widely ripped the flimsy glacée boot.
Yet not to Tom the accident proved bootless,
Though fruitful in excruciating pain—
For soon an amputation left him footless,
Yet the event bore fortune in its train:
Fate, thus strangely and at dead of night,
Flung in Tom's arms a heiress in her right.

She was an Indian Nabob's only daughter;
A little too much for romance inclined,

She still refused the multitude that sought her,
For none quite suited her fastidious mind.
And when she travelled, she was aye attended
By a companion and a faithful black,
Both proved by years of service, who defended
Her virtue, and her fortune, from attack.
The aged female cousin played propriety
And welcome foil to beauty in society.

And the girl sweetly called Tom Hero, Savior,
Took endless pains to prove her gratitude ;
Tended him, nursed him, and her whole behavior
Was redolent of soft solicitude.
She paid his doctor, aired him in her carriage,
Vowed that she loved him—was by him beloved.
How could it end but in another marriage ?
And she conveyed him, when he could be moved,
To a snug villa, on the lake of Como,
Where the black servant acted Major Domo.

She was polite, daintily round in figure,
Her soft complexion mocked the velvet peach ;
Active, and in her youthful vigor,
Her native grace no mocking art might reach.
Her smile, the prettiest dimple aye displaying,
She was—but words are wanting to say what.
To mimic Pope's, or was it Addison's saying,
Think what a wife should be, and she was that.
And Tom was almost happy. Conscience never
Troubled him long. You must not think him clever

Because he did what others would have shuddered
To undertake, with a most wholesome dread
Of being wrecked. He drifted on unruddered :
Fools still rush in where angels fear to tread.
Tom acted still from impulse and neglected
All consequence, therefore he was a fool,

The sport of Fate. If he by chance reflected,
 It was but chance : exceptions prove the rule.
 Of whim and circumstance the merest tool,
 He acted like a knave, but was a fool.

One evening, at the pale moon's invitation,
 They sauntered by the waterside till late :
 Tom in a state of moody invitation
 For his foot pained him, and he thought of Kate.
 And still as slowly, hand in hand, they wandered,
 A faint voice recalled them from a point remote
 Breaking Tom's trance who cruel memories pondered,
 A small despairing cry, "The boat, the boat !"
 And at the sound Tom lifts his eyes and sees
 A small craft drifting in the evening breeze.

Stilly and slow the wherry kept approaching
 Wafted by zephyrs in towards the trees,
 On ripple after ripple yet encroaching
 Till, with his crutch, he could the gunnel seize.
 Then May exclaimed—she still was quite the lover—
 "You must not leave me, darling, at this hour,
 "Let me call Cæsar ; he shall row it over."
 But Tom already pulled with all his power
 Till the boat seemed, as watched the anxious wife
 All lonely on the bank, a thing of life.

Nor was the little craft long time in reaching—
 Thus stroke by stroke to speed impelled—the shore
 Tom sees, ere long his boat below them beaching,
 A lady with some children—there were four.
 The governess, her summer raiment gleaming,
 Stepped forward gracefully, as if to thank
 His courtesy. Then stopped, and faintly screaming
 "O Tom ! O Husband !" on his breast she sank.
 Thus on her former haven cast by Fate,
 His lost, neglected, still devoted Kate.

He dragged her rudely from the children's hearing,
"Curse you," he cried; "you're ever in my way."
Then an armed hand high toward heaven uprearing—
"Your life is forfeit if a word you say."
"Not so," she cried, "no crime your life shall sully
"If I must die not yours, but mine, the deed."
Quickly she snatched the weapon from the bully
And aimed a blow which made her bosom bleed,
A moment more the fatal steel, flung wide
By Tom's strong arm, fell glittering in the tide.

And as the pale face, calm in love's devotion,
Shone in the pallid glory of the moon,
His own became convulsed with deep emotion,
And down his cheeks the hot tears trickled soon.
"O Kate," he cried, "I love you more than ever
"You are a saint, and I a sinful brute;
"Can you forgive me? We will never sever."
The penitent fell grovelling at her foot—
"Fly with me! In an hour I can arrange all—
"Reclaim my soul and be my guardian angel."

Then swiftly to the Western Hemisphere
Tom fled with Kate, his first love and his last,
And lived there in a sort of demi-sphere
Of social rank—of what the world calls caste:
Till Kate one day a paper of no scant age
From England, turning carelessly about,
Hit on Tom's name and something of advantage,
Which, quickly to her husband pointing out,
He sees the squire is dead, and he is wanted
To claim some money. They're, of course, enchanted.

"To start at once for home I am decided,"
Says Tom in tone decisive, sharp, and brisk.
Then Kate her anxious fears for him confided:
"Was all quite safe, and did he run no risk?"

And then, with pretty blushes, made confession :

- “ If you go home, I’ll ask a little boon—
- “ If pressing time allows so great concession—
- “ I have a son—O, bring him to me soon !
- “ To the good priest who wed us, I confided
- “ Him at his birth. There he has since resided.”

And in a month sweet Kate, her face all sunny,
 Welcomed her husband back again with joy ;
 He brought with him a quantity of money,
 And what she valued more than gold, her boy.
 And when her eyes were sated with beholding
 The childish beauty which his father praised,
 She sank upon her knees, her arms enfolding
 His form, and thankfully to heaven upraised
 Her small white hands, and then she prayed
 A simple prayer, and these the words she said :

- “ O God ! Who seest everything, Thou knowest
- “ Thou hast not made my husband over wise,
- “ Give of that love with which Thou overflowest,
- “ That so I may find favour in his eyes.
- “ O make me fair. Grant me by soft submission
- “ To win his soul and elevate his life ;
- “ Teach me that noblest end of woman’s mission,
- “ To be a faithful, humble, loving wife,
- “ That so my patient ministry may win
- “ His love, and shield his future path from sin.”

In a dense forest, on a little clearing
 Near a vast river in the free, far West,
 Live Kate and Tom, their children wisely rearing,
 For Kate’s tuition is the very best.
 Her presence makes the log hut seem a palace,
 Her babies little princes and princesses ;
 Her touch transforms the rude cup to a chalice,
 Comelier than purple are her clean print dresses.

Thus they are happy. Nor does recollection
Of past distresses mar their great affection.

And Kate is with a holy wisdom, wise
Thus to exclude the memory of sin,
Guarding the portals of her paradise,
That no insidious tempter enter in.
And she herself, with her own dainty fingers
Lovingly active, fills his evening bowl
And lights his evening pipe ; then by him lingers
The sweet face radiant with the saintly soul.
Her charming image picturing in your thought,
Own Tom, at length, has drifted into port.

ZAIDEE'S CAPRICE.

I.

The play was at an end. The curtain fell,
 And silence reigned in the deserted hall ;
 Hushed was the tinkle of the prompter's bell,
 And hushed the urchin stage-boy's nasal "call."

Hushed was the mad applause and laughter loud,
 Extinct the flickering footlights one and all ;
 And homeward wandered the delighted crowd
 From pit and gallery, circle, box, and stall.

Homeward they wandered, too, who nightly ply
 The magic art which holds enthralled the ear,
 With subtle mimicry deceives the eye,
 Wreathes the glad smile, or draws the pitying tear.

Homeward they wend, if haply they have homes—
 Not always of Art's devotees the lot—
 The author seeks his study and his tomes
 To thread the mazes of another plot.

The clown puts off his wild exuberant folly
 And motley garb, to don his private rags ;
 And with his private air of melancholy
 His wearied form along the pavement drags.

The fairy leaves her tinsel's tawdry glimmer,
 Wipes from her cheeks the roseate hue of paint,
 And the chill gas-lamps throw a sickly glimmer
 O'er the frail figure, weak, and wan, and faint.

The columbine dusts off the powdered chalk
 From buxom arms whose native charms are red,
 And joins her husband in the homeward walk
 To the connubial supper, and to bed.

The glittering, flaunting heroines of the ballet
Quit the disguise which made them seem so fair,
And shrinking 'neath the archway of some alley
To dwellings poor, yet virtuous, repair.

Yet envious some who mourn a beauty flown,
Eyes, fever glamored by the hectic cheek,
On some frail sister's equipage have thrown,
Who keeps a brougham—*on a pound a week!*

The famed tragedian, who portrays the crushing
Heroic agony of moral strife :
Runs like a peccant schoolboy, meekly rushing
Home, to be henpecked by a shrewish wife.

And she, the tragic temple's brightest star,
In Art omnipotent, in Beauty grand ;
Whose proud renown is spreading wide and far
Throughout remote recesses of the land :

She, who to common words strange force imparts,
Fettering Briareus in her magic bands :
Winning the homage of ten thousand hearts,
The loud applause of twice ten thousand hands :

She who each secret heart-spring can assail,
And strangely madden the serenest brain :
Can make the thoughtless wildly weep and wail,
And, by a gesture, make them laugh again :

She too wends homeward. Not indeed on foot,
Nor humbly jolting in a hackney cab ;
A chariot hers, with prancing steeds to boot—
Dark rifle-green, and lined with red and drab.

Home to her gorgeous, art-adorned saloon,
Where none find entrance but a chosen few,
She reigns a fairy sovereign o'er her boon
Comrades, and lightly sways the jovial crew.

Where eddied round the social steaming bowl—
 These things are not, my friends, for you and me—
 The feast of wisdom and the flow of soul,
 The pungent squib and sparkling repartee.

But there was one among the guests to-night—
 A man of travel and of intellect—
 Who seemed to have the *entrée* there of right,
 A glass where wit and fashion might reflect.

His converse rippled on in sparkling flow
 Of graceful satire from his tutored lip,
 Painting word-pictures, as rich colors glow
 Beneath a graceful artist's pencil tip.

He spoke of politics, art, foreign lands,
 Of love, adventure, hazard, and intrigue,
 And sang strange ditties few might understand,
 Yet still the ear would charm and not fatigue.

And Zaidee listened, breathless 'neath the spell
 Of the rich fancies the glib tongue expressed,
 Till he began a little tale to tell
 Which roused the fair one's personal interest.

A little tale which would the annals swell
 Of martyrdom beneath the social code,
 How vice may buy, and innocence will sell
 Its purity in marriage—*à la mode*.

But as our story the results will trace,
 Of which his narrative became the cause,
 We could not tell it with Hugh Clifford's grace,
 Nor win like him your favor and applause.

We'll hasten to the good nights which came after
 The varied comments when the speaker ceased ;
 And leave the lingering echoes of their laughter
 To hover o'er the fragments of the feast.

II.

The morning came, and o'er her chocolate,
Listlessly wrapped in a fleecy cloud
Of snowy drapery, Zaidee lingered late,
Conning her evening's lesson half aloud.

There was a bounding step upon the stair,
Then entered through the roughly opened door,
A personation of intense despair,
Flinging its new silk hat upon the floor.

His raiment disarranged, disordered hair,
Saw Zaidee sideways glancing from her page,
And slyly putting on her roguish air,
"Brother, you'd make your fortune on the stage."

"False! She is false!" he cried; "I thought her true;
"Fool that I was, I thought her true to me.
"By Heaven! A deed of dire revenge I'll do,
"And wed with the first comely wench I see."

"Make no rash vow," she cried, "I would not own
"As sister, pretty Anna, my soubrette,
"Though brighter cheeks, or tinier hand, or zone
"I don't remember to have seen as yet."

Then with a sudden infall of caprice,
Which so became her nature's sprightly tone:
"Prithee, sweet The, these frantic ravings cease,
"And trust **your** cure to me, and me alone.

"What say you, if I choose a bride for you,
"Fair, chaste, accomplished, educated, good;
"Who, swearing to love, honor and be true,
"Will keep her altar vows as housewives should.

"Who weds in haste repenteth when too late.
"Till you have seen my *protégé*, defer,
"I ask of you no favor but to wait—
"I'll win the maid, and you shall marry her."

Thus she decreed, and Theo's voice was stilled :

A charming woman ever has her way,
When once that wayward sorceress Zaidee willed,
No man was rash enough to say her nay.

Then to her manager in haste she wrote
(She managed him though, were the truth disclosed)
A dainty, pink, patchouli-scented note,
Described herself "severely indisposed"—

To act, was understood. Then, Presto ! Quick
She darted to the toilet's mystic shrine,
Transformed herself by pantomimic trick,
To a male image of the form divine.

And as before the glass by Theo's side,
In virile garnishments she stood arrayed,
The keenest eye might scarcely have descried
Which was the youth, and which the charming maid.

Archly she turned, a bright-eyed roguish elf,
Saluted both his cheeks with merry laugh.
"Adieu ! sweet The. I go, your second self,
"To woo, and win for you your better half."

III.

Bright with its thousand lights, the festive hall
Shone gaily on the thoughtless, glittering throng—
On much of character, or of none at all,
On much of innocence, and much of wrong.

Beauty was there enhanced by all that Art
Cunningly subtle, lends to native charms ;
By all that taste and splendor can impart
Of keenest edge to woman's warlike arms.

Yet one meek, dove-like spirit hovered there,
The gentle cynosure of every eye ;

A lovely magnet so supremely fair
One still must gaze, though gazing were to die.

Bright were her violet eyes. Her golden hair
Wreathed on her brow in great Madonna braids.
Queenly she moved with proudly modest air,
The fairest flower among a hundred maids.

Grand in her splendid maidenhood she leant
Upon the arm of him whom she should wed.
Modestly downward her bright orbs bent,
And when he whispered, not a word she said.

Yet evident in every gesture lay
The deep oppression of a secret grief.
Of all the charms that o'er her features play
In Zaidee's eyes that sweet, sad air was chief.

She, patient long, at last in merry valse
Pounced like a playful tiger on her prey :
Clasped in embraces amorously false,
In its voluptuous maze whirled her away.

Still palpitant with wild exhilarant glow
Her partner to the cactus bower she leads,
Pouring her love out in impassioned flow,
Reading her soul as only woman reads.

"O fly with me ! I am possessed of wealth,
"And if to gold you give but little heed,
"I'm young and comely, strong in hope and health.
"What more endowments does a suitor need ?

"But more than this I love you with the zest
"Of a first passion's boundless, quenchless fire.
"O ! will you take your roué to your breast,
"Weakly submissive to a cruel sire ?

"Better to die than thus exclude the light :
"Love is life's sunshine flowing from above.

“ No blacker crime exists in Heaven’s sight ;
 “ ’Tis terrible—to wed and not to love !
 “ O cruel ! Make not life a living death,
 “ Soiling your pure soul with a double crime.
 “ If you are obdurate I shall yield my breath
 “ And end my young days ’ere I reach my prime.”

She sank upon a knee and seized the hand,
 Which yielded to the sweet imprisonment ;
 Did Zaidee plead no man could long withstand,
 Then how should a weak maid withhold consent ?

And while from Amy’s eyes the tears fell fast—
 Soft gushing tears of love and gratitude—
 Her rival found his fiancée at last,
 And said to Zaidee something very rude.

Before the tired musicians were released,
 Or champagne volleys ceased their noisy play,
 Or the gay revels of that evening ceased,
 A duel was arranged for break of day.

IV.

Swift to her hostelry fair Zaidee sped,
 Threw off her sable broadcloth’s dark disguise,
 And stood confessed in charms which merited
 The praise they ever won from mortal eyes.

She sought her erewhile rival in his halls,
 Where he made preparation for the fight,
 And, stealing on him suddenly, recalls
 Memories long hidden in oblivion’s night.

She stood a brilliant spectre of the past—
 The dead past which his iron will had slain—
 And coldly spoke : “ Sir, when we parted last,
 “ Both hoped perhaps we should not meet again.

"You are intent on death to one I love,
"Resign your purpose and submit to fate
"Or you shall feel, I swear by all above,
"The dire reprisals of a woman's hate."

"No more," he cried, "my honor is at stake,
"And what is life to me and honor lost?
"For what weak fool, pray, do you Delton take
"To be by wiles of a fond woman crossed?"

"Honor," she sneered, "talk not of honor now."
Her dangerous eyes a fierce defiance hurled:
"My woman's wiles shall strike your proud head low,
"And brand you as a felon to the world."

Pale as the marble slab on which he lent,
Ghastly and white his evil visage turned,
And 'neath the beetle brows that o'er them bent,
Eyes hideous, like two lurid pit-fires burned.

His dastard hand felt trembling for his dirk
But Zaidee did not seem the least alarmed,
Out came her glittering dagger with a jerk
"O coward fool," she cried, "I too am armed.

"Write an apology upon the spot—
"I tell you I've a *penchant* for this man.
"Within twelve hours he will be mine—if not
"You're free to wed the maiden—if *you can*."

"Agreed," he cried, "I have affairs in town.
"I'll leave your precious *protégé* scot free
"If I but find—by the night mail set down—
"You both are hence, leaving the field to me."

"'Tis well," she said, "I see your brain is keen
"Your judgment—as it ever was—discreet."
She turned and made her exit like a queen
And hastened to her inn with footsteps fleet.

V.

The clock struck one, as like a little bird,
With palpitating breast that leaves its cage,
Amy, with timorous ear, the summons heard,
And tripped downstairs, with footstep soft and safe.
In her white bridal raiment, and her wreath
Of orange-blossoms, hastening to the gate,
Under great oak trees, fanned by zephyr's breath,
Where her fond lover's urgent post-boys wait.
Swift whirled the lovers through the moonlit night,
For Zaidee's guineas urged to speed the boys.
No stars as Amy's violet orbs were bright,
While throbbed her heart with wild tumultuous joys.
Then, hastening to the couch whereon he lay,
Yet all unconscious of approaching bliss,
While laughing dimples round her small mouth play,
She waked her brother with a merry kiss.
"Up, up," she cried, "and quickly dress for church.
"And while you shave, I'll deftly curl your hair."
Then in her bosom, making a short search,
"Here is the license, and the bride is—there."
She sped her maid to summon priest and clerk,
Watched drive away the palpitating pair;
Then changed her sex, and scarce had done her work,
Before she heard their footsteps on the stair.
Then gravely heard her brother's introduction—
"My sister, Amy—Zaidee, my dear wife."
Then the girl's lips commence the honey suction,
And vow a friendship lasting as their life.

VI.

Loud laughed that night each late uproarious guest,
Lingering, delighted o'er champagne and ice,
As her red lips the merry tale expressed
Of folly loving Zaidee's last caprice.

LISETTE'S PENANCE.

God's blessed sun in heaven's arc shone bright,
Bringing sweet hope where hope before was not ;
Shed its soft mellow flood of golden light
Upon the humble fisher's gleaming cot.
Where o'er the little harbor's peaceful creek,
O'erhung by lofty rugged step-hewn rock,
The village crowned the cliff, and on the wall
Of the white chapel, where the bell's low call
Summoned the aged curé's pious flock
To thank their Maker for a prosperous week.

There in that simple temple's sacred bound,
Where votive offerings of saved seamen hung,
And texts and painted legends gleamed around,
The white-haired preacher's earnest accents rung.
Heaven's messenger to warn, exhort, command ;
Saint-like and pure, and free from passion's trace,
Faith and meek charity illumed each trait
And patient hope made light life's waning day,
And mild enthusiasm fired the aged face,
Stayed the weak quavering voice, and palsied hand.

" Love one another," was his text. He spoke
Of brotherly affection, of the love
Of children for their parents, and awoke
The tenderest chords which human hearts approve.
Then spoke he of that holy mystery :
Of that close love which maidens bear for men,
Which Heaven sends as foretaste of the bliss
Perfected in a purer world than this,
Wiping his moistened lashes now and then,
Haply at thought of his own history.

The love, he said, of woman, pure and bright,
Soothing man's harassed soul's toil-weary pain,

Was symbolled by the mellow softened light
That slanted through the painted window-pane,
Shedding a hallowed, heavenly, graceful glow
O'er the dull things of earth ; but that the love
Of evil women was but like the curse
That Eve has brought us : made the wicked worse,
Unfitting them for the pure heaven above,
Made hell of home which should be heaven below,

Then he portrayed with a great eloquence,
Grand in the mighty power of simple words,
Which charmed the higher nature's purest sense
Of those who mutely his sweet teaching heard ;
The vast, sublime, ethereal expansion
Of love angelic ; where no shade of doubt
Marred spirit communing, while those whose base
And grosser natures gave such love no place
Became as devils, and were cast without
The confines of the vast celestial mansion.

And then he brought his sermon to an end,
Breathing a blessing ; and the little flock
Began its meditative way to wend
Down the sun-flooded pathway of the rock :
Old men and matrons, thinking of the days—
The halcyon days of courtship—preface sweet
To peaceful years of happy unison.
Young men and maidens who had just begun
To taste the joys which make our spring-time fleet :
The transient bliss which no foreboding stays.

And side by side went two with lingering pace,
A bright-eyed maiden and her comely swain ;
Such wealth of joy beamed in her laughing face
As who beheld might ne'er feel sad again.
Her lover's stalwart, well knit, manly form
Fashioned in Nature's best proportioned mould,

Towered at her side in youthful pride erect,
Loving to cherish, powerful to protect ;
And the swarth weather-beaten visage told
How wont he was to battle with the storm.

And as they halted underneath the tree
That shadowed her home porch, laughing Lisette
Cried " Au revoir, Pierre. You dance with me
" First at Pere Guizot's fête ? " But with regret
He shook the curls back from his handsome head
Sadly and said : " No, not to-night, Lisette.
" My mother is sore sick, and I must be
" Where filial duty loudly calls for me.
" Dance with some other, dearest, do not fret,
" My thought shall watch thee from my mother's bed."

Bright-eyed Lisette was quite resolved to go.
At eventide, in all their finery decked,
She with her sister and her sister's beau
To Pere Guizot's their eager steps direct.
There amid gaities seductive round,
Pierre forgotten, soon the bright coquette
Flirted with all ; but he who pleased her best
Was a young, flippant, pleasure-loving guest,
A town-bred student who was deep in debt,
And tired of pleasures which in towns abound.

Joyous he quaffed the brimming ruby glass,
Nimbly he tripped it in the merry dance,
Blythely saluting every comely lass,
Versed in the arts which Nature's gifts enhance.
But chiefly on Lisette he ever bent
His amorous eyes, and for her favor wooed
With courtly compliments, and softly tried
The winning arts which he so deftly plied :
And oftenest was it for her hand he sued
In mazy dance, or whispering o'er her leant.

And when it all was over, who but he
Guided her home, with fond solicitude,
Half circled in a close embrace, which she
Had censured in Pierre as rather rude :
Although the night *was* dark, and then, you see,
The way was rough. She might have stumbled, or
Have struck her dainty foot against a stone
Had her young escort let her walk alone ;
So many dangers must be guarded for
Before they reached her porch's giant tree.

And there they stood and whispered. When, at last,
They parted—sad the evening's transient bliss
Was o'er already, on its wings the blast
Wafted the sounding echo of a kiss.
Then as Lisette turned to the wicket white,
A dark form intervened. Stricken with awe,
Trembling and shrinking, cried she " Who is there ?
" Child, how you frightened me ; you bad Pierre."
The tall shade answered not. She only saw
The bowed head rise between her and the light.

He pushed her from him, " Wanton, get thee in,
" My mother dying, and my sweetheart false.
" God, whence this penance ? What has been my sin ?
" My mother dead, and my best loved one false !"
And with a curse that sounded very dread,
He swore he'd take his boat and put to sea,
A rare good night for fishing ! It might be
Death would o'ertake him, then he would be free.
Lisette sobbed angrily, " You may for me,
" May you be drowned ; I wish that you were dead."

Prone on her couch she flung herself, and tried
In vain to slumber, but still sobbed and tossed
In passionate writhings, till at length she cried
Herself into a fitful sleep-trance, lost

In horrible imaginings and dreams
Of terrible shipwreck, till in torrents fell
Fierce rain and hail, which her frail casement broke,
And mingled lightning flash and thunder stroke,
Startling her slumber to a waking yell,
Which all her fancy's dire fulfilment seems.

It seemed to her that 'mid the weird, wild, hoarse
Wail of the tempest came distressful cries,
She thought she saw Pierre, a pallid corse,
Amid the seething billows sink and rise ;
And when the storm subsided, 'ere the dawn
Shed on the reeking rocks its garish light,
She rose and tottered, filled with dire remorse,
Where the mad billows spent their useless force
At the cliffs foot, and knelt, and strained her sight,
Her wretched breast with wild forebodings torn.

And as she kept her vigil on the crags
Another craft came home, with splintered mast,
A woeful wreck, its canvas all in rags,
A terrible testimony of the blast.
But still his boat came not. She tore her hair
And wrung her hands, and called upon Pierre,
And grovelled on the rock, and gazed and gazed
Till the hot sun her burning eyeballs dazed ;
And evening's shadows found her sitting there
In a mute agony of deep despair.

And on the third day of her vigil sad,
As she sat gazing out with stony orbs
As one whom dire distress had driven mad,
As one whose being one great grief absorbs—
The aged Curé sought her out, and told
How wrong it was thus to succumb to grief :
And whispered of repentance. Softened, led
Her to the convent ; had her put to bed

Till a great flood of tears gave her relief,
And tender ministry her mind consoled.

That convent was her home. Religion was
The life naught else was powerful to save,
And she became a quiet, meek-eyed nun,
Sedately modest, pure, and pale, and grave.
In midnight watchings by the bed of pain,
In daily ministrations doing good,
Her life flows onward like a peaceful dream,
And sick men welcome, like a sunny beam,
The sweet wan face beneath the sombre hood :
In heaven she hopes to meet Pierre again.

But chiefly where the course of youthful love
Is ruffled, warped, and choked with carking care
By green-eyed jealousy, which strives to prove
Its phantom wrongs are real—it is there
Her mission lies ; or where some gay coquette
Toys thoughtlessly with a great manly heart
In cruel sport : she tells, with bitter tears,
Her own sad tale. And thus, in the long years,
When she shall end her penance and depart ;
Those whom she reconciled shall not forget
The village mediatrix, sweet Sœur Lisette.

CLAUDE MELNOTTE.

A BALLAD.

On her snowy drapery lying,
Loving friends around her sighing,
But the reason still denying,
In her chamber May lay dying.

Pure and free from earthly taint,
Hers the beauty of a saint
Such as words may never paint.

Very weak and pale was May,
Paler, weaker day by day,
With a gradual decay,
Slowly ebb'd her life away.

Very weak and very faint,
Uttering nor moan nor plaint,
Hanging on God's may or mayn't.

And her sister Maud stood by
Gentle ministry to try,
Heaving many a heartfelt sigh,
Praying God she might not die.

And when her death was very near,
May took her hand and whispered, "Dear,
"Bend your head that none may hear.

"Sister, you alone may know
"Whose the hand that struck the blow
"Unwittingly, that laid me low—
"Listen, it is better so.

"I loved him, and he loved me not,
"Let me die and be forgot.
"May happiness attend his lot.

“ Love must or be slain or slay,
 “ I strove to live, but love said Nay.
 “ His decree no hand may stay—
 “ God’s decree may none gainsay.

“ When I lie upon my bier,
 “ Let this never reach his ear
 “ Lest it cost one bitter tear :

“ I might never be his wife,
 “ Therefore I lay down my life.
 “ Leave a world with trouble rife,
 “ Tired of the unequal strife.

“ He but loved me as a brother,
 “ Darling Maud, he loved another.
 “ Sister, can you guess that other ?

“ Maud, I saw it in his face,
 “ Yours the beauty, yours the grace,
 “ Yours the worth to fill the place—
 “ To win the coveted embrace.

“ When poor May is dead and cold,
 “ When his loving arms enfold,
 “ Keep the secret that she told.

“ Sister, hear my dying plea,
 “ Yours the bliss I may not see ;
 “ Be to him what I would be,
 “ Live and love, forgetting me.”

Stilled the true heart in her breast,
 With a sigh she sank to rest—
 “ Weep not, for God knoweth best.”

Slowly then the passing bell,
 Tolling in a solemn knell,
 Sadly seemed her tale to tell
 Who loved, not wisely, but too well.

II.

Maud was cold and Maud was coy
Deeming Hugh a wayward boy ;
But he would not be her toy,
She was now his only joy.

Patiently he wooed and won,
Till beneath the summer sun
Her " I will " had made them one.

Proud with a jubilant pride,
Hugh gazed on his lovely bride,
Nor thought, as she sat at his side,
Of the flower that withered and died.

Then his regiment was ordered abroad,
And he kissed the girl adored,
As she, herself, buckled his sword.

And Maud at the parting was sad,
Though calumny said she was glad
To be rid of the turbulent lad,
But I do not think her so bad.

Rumours of war were rife—
Tales of havoc and strife
And terrible loss of life.

Tales that palsied the sense—
Tales of attack and defence,
Of carnage fierce and dense,
And the battle's consequence.

Tales of a devoted band,
Who receiving false command,
Fought an army hand to hand.

Horrors too dire to be named
Of riderless chargers lamed,
Of warriors mangled and maimed,
While none knew who should be blamed.

Britons on destruction's brink
From obedience never shrink—
They may fight but must not think.

And one day—the papers said—
Hugh his regiment had led,
Had fallen, and bled and bled,
And was brought to the ambulance—dead.

And she wept him for nearly a day,
Then she wiped her tears away.
She never had loved him like May.

Yet she mourned a year for him,
Widowed, buxom, blythe and trim,
Governed by coquettish whim
Her joyous life no grief could dim.

Mourned as other widows do,
And to his memory was true,
Until another came to woo.

For—be it said to her shame—
While she had borne Hugh's name
Embers of an earlier flame
Scorched her bosom all the same.

A flame she had quenched in tears,
A flame of her girlish years
When hopes were stronger than fears.

A love for a student of art
Who went with a weary heart
To work in the world apart,
To toil in the world's great mart.

Now he had risen to fame
His passion no years might tame.
Ardently wooing he came

Hearing that now she was free—
Who knew what yet might be ?

Humbly he urged his plea,
Humbly he bent the knee,
Ardently wooing the dame.
Do you think that Maud was to blame
If she kindly admitted his claim ?

III.

'Twas evening. The flickering blaze
Symbolic of life's fitful phase,
Threw a network of glimmer and haze ;
The cat lay prone in its rays.

Prone at their feet on the floor.
Handed they sat, and they swore
To be faithful for evermore.

Wrapped in a consciousness sweet
The moments flew silent and fleet,
No sound but their hearts' swift beat
And the purr of the cat at their feet.

Why did they raise their eyes ?
Was it in fear of surprise ?
Was it in dread surmise ?

A ghostly face at the door—
A dead face with one streak of gore—
A face Maud had seen before—
A face whose picture she wore,

Sternly surveying the pair ;
And the eyeballs terrible glare
Turned Maud to stone in her chair.

And he cursed her sitting there
With her cozening innocent air ;
And he asked her how she could dare
To be false and yet so fair.

Nearer and nearer he trod,
 Blaspheming, and calling on God,
 And signed to the door with a nod.

And Maud whispered her lover to go,
 And heard, betwixt shiver and glow,
 The desperate struggle below,
 The mutterings angry and low.

Then the sickening thud of a blow,
 With a desperate yearning to know
Which was the fallen foe.

Then a swift step on the stair,
 And a pressure of lips on her hair,
 Then she looked up, unaware,
 And lo! her lover was there.

She sprang to his breast with a cry—
 "The fool is dead or will die.

"There is nothing to do but to fly.

"There is nothing to do but to go,

"Your husband lies dying below,

"He aimed a murderous blow,

"And I feled him—I swear it was so.

"For we fought as men should fight—

"Guiltless am I in God's sight ;

"So may he defend the right."

Pale from the recent alarm,
 With kisses tender and warm
 He gathered her up in his arm,
 "Save me, O save me from harm !"

He lifted her out of her chair,
 He hurried her down the stair,
 She knew that the horror was there,
 And she swooned with a stifled shout.
 A charger stood pawing without.

'Twas no moment to stay or to doubt,
He mounted, and turned him about.

He did not guide the steed
But urged him, with shouts, to speed :
Riding away from his deed.

And he holds Maud close in his arms,
Tenderly folds her and warms,
Lovingly clasping the charms
Still pale from the recent alarms.

The night-wind played with her dress,
And toyed with each gleaming tress,
As they rode through the wilderness.

She moved not nor uttered a moan
As they rode through the moonlight alone :
And he cried with a stifled groan—
“ Oh, God ! her spirit hath flown ! ”

He staid his headlong course,
And he lifted her down from his horse,
But he lifted her down—a corse.

He laid her prone on the plain,
Wept o'er her, and kissed her in vain :
Raved with a sorrow insane ;
She woke not, she spoke not again.

He bathed her face in the stream,
It shone, in the moon's pale beam,
Like a ghost in a hideous dream.

A sound of pursuers arose,
A sound of approaching foes
But he tore his hair and his clothes,
And neither spoke nor rose.

His captors surrounded him soon,
In the light of the pallid moon
He struggled and sank in a swoon.

He gave his arms an upward toss,
Cried a cry of loud remorse,
Flung him panting on the corse.
Life returned—with reason's loss.

Then they bound him on a hack,
To the town they bore him back,
Claude Melnotte, the maniac.

Stilled the heart that beat so true,
Underneath the spreading yew,
Wept by those he loved and knew,
In his cold grave lieth Hugh.

Truly God's way is not our way:
Yet thus it pleased him to repay
The martyrdom of murdered May.

PICKED UP AT SEA.

I.

The dying day's last taint of gore had faded from the
West,

All signs of toil are over, and Nature is at rest,
The pale stars twinkle peacefully in the mighty arc
o'erhead

And kiss the sleeping river in its willow-guarded bed.
The silent zephyrs, stealing scent laden o'er the hill,
Toy idly with, but move not, the huge arms of the mill.
Hushed is the bleating of the lambs, the lowing of the
kine,

And in a silence as of death the hills and dales combine.
The many-voiced and feathered choir in the weird
woods is still,

And wreathed and ghost-like phantoms the misty
valleys fill.

The only sign of human life that lingers to the night
Is given from the mansion upon the Beacon Height—
The old ancestral mansion that frowns above the stream
From out whose ivy-clambered front the lighted windows
gleam,

As if some old three-decker a giant hand upraised,
And fired the entrails of the ship until the portholes
blazed.

II.

With the sheen of waxen tapers the grand old halls
were bright

With the crystal constellations of the brilliant
chandeliers :

A throng of motley revellers moved 'neath the flood
light,

A throng of smiling ladies and of gallant cavaliers.

And jewels blazed resplendent, and bosoms flashed
their snow,

And eyes shot challenges of love in quick and spark-
ling glance

And the liquid notes of music, in soft voluptuous flow,
Ruled the intricate mazes of the ever changeful dance.

And myriad trivial incidents had happened ere the morn,
Whose memory through after years should ever
soothe or rankle,

How some cruel Lady Flora had shown bewitching
scorn,

How celestial were the contours of my Lady Chloe's
ankle.

And lying mirrors glamor still reproduced the bright

Display of youth and beauty in fairy-like profusion:

In a sweet deceptive mirage, seduced the dazzled sight

With an infinite prospective of magical illusion.

One maid there moved in every charm conspicuously
fair,

A Venus in her beauty and a Juno in her pride,

And to beaux who thronged around her, with coy,
coquettish air,

In her laughter's soft low music and with polished
wit replied.

But aye a dreamy absent look would start into her eyes,
The siren laugh, the merry speech uprose not from
her heart,

Her lovely bosom rose and fell oppressed with silent
sighs,

Her blithe and courteous bearing was but an acted
part.

Her restless glances seemed to seek one absent from the
crowd

Her listening ear attentive to hear some loved voice
sing

And her whole being seemed to say to him who watched
aloud
These are my subjects. Where is he to whom I bow
as King ?

III.

Shunning the garish light—
The revels gay delight—
Out in the chilly night
He stood alone,
In the weird midnight hour,
Upon the crumbling tower
Where the dark ivy, the owls' gloomy bower,
Embraced the stone.

And o'er the parapet
Afar his gaze was set
Where stream and ocean met
In reverie.

Sweet music smote his ear—
Her voice he seemed to hear,
The form he held so dear
He seemed to see.

Then on his sleeve a maid,
Timid and half afraid,
Gently a white hand laid,
Breaking the spell ;
Like some fair angel sent
With merciful intent
A soul with anguish rent
Of hope to tell.

“ Why are you here ? ” he cried,
“ To mock me and deride
“ My grief in your young pride ?
“ Seek not to cope

“ With rancour, which in you were sin.
 “ Revel ’mid natures that are kin,
 “ Nor strive from cherished gloom to win
 “ The misanthrope.”

“ Oh ! Hard of Heart,” she said,
 “ Though sternly you upbraid,
 “ I will not be dismayed.
 “ Am I to blame ?

“ Our true friends are but few,
 “ ’Tis wicked to eschew
 “ Hearts that for friendship sue
 “ With honest aim.

“ You are as some mad fisherman,
 “ Who the full net doth ever scan
 “ For one small lost fish which he can
 “ Never regain :
 “ Who will not heed the gleaming prey,
 “ But flings the gifts of Heaven away,
 “ Weakly, as in childish play,
 “ Into the main.

“ Or like some maniac mariner,
 “ Whose saner sight strange fancies blur,
 “ By demons in his soul astir,
 “ To doom decoyed :
 “ Who sees the beacon o’er the main,
 “ Yet wildly steers through storm and rain,
 “ Beating oceanward again,
 “ Self destroyed.

“ Despise me not, though deem it bold you may,
 “ I thus the dictates of my heart obey,
 “ But heed the warning words I say—
 “ Indeed you ought.
 “ And let it be my pride to know
 “ I lit the torch, whose friendly glow,

“ Piercing the dark gloom of your woe,
“ Led you to port.”

He turned, and straight his vision fell
On brimming orbs, deep as the well
Where fabled Truth is said to dwell :

Clear, pure, and fair.

Seizing her head in his two hands
Swiftly a chaste salute he lands
Beneath the silken pearl-bound bands
Of her bright hair.

“ O soul, too young and bright
“ To fathom deep despair aright,
“ Be from thy heart the memory of this night
“ For ever banished,
“ Let not the shadow of my woe
“ Sully thy youthful joy. The path I go
“ Natures like thine may never know.”
He spoke and vanished.

IV.

The restless steed stands fretting in his stall,
The idle knaves grow insolent and fat,
The listless hound lies yawning on his mat,
And silence reigns in each deserted hall.

The dust lay thick upon neglected tomes,
And spiders wove their silken snares unchecked,
And rats ran riot nor of danger recked,
And mice in mouldy wardrobes made their homes.

The woods were rife with unmolested game,
And recreant foxes feared nor hound nor horn,
Weeds choked the flowers and tares replaced the
corn,
And the wild rabbit grew completely tame.

Lord of the stately mansion and fair lands,
The Hypochondriac paced the groves forlorn,
And cursed the hour in which he had been born.
“Ghost of myself, why live? To other hands
“For worthier use let me give all,” he cried.
This end was ever in his thoughts. He planned
How he might die, yet not by his own hand—
By seeming accident concealing suicide.

V.

The Squire foresook his sleepless couch at the first
gleam of dawn,
He strode towards the casement and looked out upon
the morn.
A boisterous gale was blowing straight from the chill
North-east,
And as the day grew greyer, its furious force increased.
The shooting coat and sportsman's gear were quickly on
his back,
He reached a double-barrelled gun down from the dusty
rack,
And, thus equipped and booted, descended to the hall,
Where an old and trusty waterhound responded to his
call.
Forth stalked the Squire into the storm with the old dog
at his heel,
Beneath his arm the fowlingpiece of twisted damask
steel,
And as he trod the winding path down to the river's
brim,
A grey-haired keeper stopped the way, and doffed his
hat to him.
“I hope I see you well, Squire. Your Honor's early out,
“'Twould do the folks' hearts good, sir, to see you more
about.

" 'Tis famous time for shooting, Squire, the ducks is flying low,

" As well they may in this here gale, for surely it do blow."

" I had a fancy, Richard, once more to try my luck.

" 'Tis long since I molested the wild goose or the duck :

" But, Keeper, you are growing grey, you ought to take more care ;

" Old men should keep their beds at night, my friend, why ar'nt you there ?

" Why are you out in the bleak blast before the day is light ? "

" 'Taint nothing strange for me, Squire, I'm mostly out all night.

" 'Tis them there plaguey poachers they has their night lines set.

" True, I be growing old, Squire, but I'm match for 'em yet.

" Let me help you with the boat, Squire." They set the craft afloat ;

The old retriever wagged his tail and jumped into the boat.

The sails were quickly hoisted ; then the Squire turned and said,

" Thanks for your help, good Richard, now hie you home to bed."

The keeper stood bare-headed. The boat the currentclave ;

And bending gently to the breeze bounded from wave to wave ;

Now flying free before the gale, now close hauled to the wind,

As in great writhings serpentine the river turned and twined

Still like a sentient thing of life through the white foam
 she sped,
While the wild game flew unheeded, and the curlew
 screeched o'er-head,
And the old hound eyed his master and then he eyed
 the gun,
And said as plain as dog could speak, 'Tis time the sport
 begun.
But the helmsman neither spoke nor stirred, but with a
 vacant glare,
The mad Squire gazed before him with a fixed and
 stony stare;
For on no sport was he intent. He was steering for
 that bourne
From whence the world in vain awaits the voyager's
 return.
The master never heeded, afar his gaze was set
As they scudded past the island where the stream and
 ocean met,
And still afar his gaze was set when the land was far
 behind,
And naught was seen but raging sea, nought heard but
 wailing wind.
And though the sails were rent to shreds, and the mast
 went by the board,
The little craft rode buoyant, and the whirlwinds rage
 ignored;
For well 'tis known a little boat may live in a great
 sea,
Her very lack of size may prove her best indemnity,
She rides upon, not breasts the waves with wild
 impetuous rush,
Nor one has power to hold her while another leaps to
 crush.
Thus, though the tempest wildly raves, and the sea runs
 mountains high,

The little craft disdains to sink, and the maniac cannot
die ;
Till his frame grown weak with hunger and his inmost
marrow chilled.
With wild delirious fancies his weakened brain is filled.

VI.

Memory ! sing a song to me,
With the rushing of the sea
In symphony.
Something that shall be of kind
With the roaring of the wind,
Sing to me.

Chasing souvenirs of the past
Through the years from first to last,
Last to first ;
Up and down, to and fro,
Till the joys I used to know
Be rehearsed.

Let me be a child again
Learning first to say Amen,
From evil scatheless :
Then, arrived at man's estate,
Loving Laure, until too late
I found her faithless.

Then the white crest of each wave
Seemed angel pinions sent to save
In his soul's dearth,
And pitying seraphs merciful
Sang, as it seemed, his body's knell,
And his soul's birth.

Then hears he wondrous minstrelsy—
Poor wearied spirit, welcome be
To realms above ;

To him Heaven's special pardon we
Bear with tenderest sympathy
Who dies for love.

To heaven they will carry me,
An angel there shall marry me.
From Zion's portals
I shall look down on faithless Laure,
Nor rage with jealous envyings more
At grovelling mortals.

Then his fancy changed anew,
For the terrible hurricane grew
In violence :
With such access of fury that
It blew the angry waters flat
With rage intense.

Then, with hideous yells and laughter,
Demon swarms came swooping after,
O'er the tide ;
And with horrible grimaces
Screech the wicked, cruel faces—
Ha ! The suicide !

Then he sees nor sprite nor devil,
Feels no sense of Good or Evil,
But a smile
Wreathes his lips. In merry dance he
Flirts with quaintly comic fancy—
Imbecile.

One conceit among a score—
Twelve jurors on a corpse, on shore
Flung by the sea,
Who, not being Latin scholars,
Said, "Our verdict is as follers,
" Fell o' de sea."

Then in mid air he sees a worm—
A little writhing form
 Of caterpillar size—
“See in that writhing worm
“Which rides upon the storm
 “The worm which never dies!”

Then the hideous reptile grew,
Passing its own body through,
 Woven in knots,
Till in interminable coils,
The clouds that lower, the sea that boils
 From sight it blots.

But at length no thought may gain,
Tenor in the palsied brain
 From pain released :
The body chilled from head to feet,
The pulses throbbed not, and the beat
 Of the heart ceased.

VII.

The storm was hushed at dawning, but with a mighty
 swell
Like heavings of some giant breast the sea still rose and
 fell.

And the sun gleamed red through the patches of the
 ragged clouds on high,
And a steamship marked the horizon huge and black
 against the sky.

As white on the crest of a billow the boat gleamed a
 tiny speck,
The man at the wheel saw it, and shouted the news to
 the deck.

And, as the vessel rushed on, the crew were aware of a
sound

Like the faint and mournful wail of a desolate dying
hound.

Then the steamer lay-to for a moment, and a boat was
got ready and manned,

If ought were alive in the craft to give it a helping hand.

But when the tars came alongside, they found nothing
more in the skiff

Than a dog that dismally howled o'er a corse that was
cold and stiff.

And they hauled both into their boat, and soon they were
back on board,

Then the surgeon examined the body, and said "I give
you my word

"This fellow is still in the flesh, though never so nearly
dead."

And he ordered his limbs to be chafed, and with brandy
his lips he fed,

And before the night had closed in it was entered down
in the log,

How a boat had been found that day with a seeming
corpse and a dog,

In longitude something or other, and latitude so-and-
so ;

How the man seemed likely to live, but the dog was
bound to go,

For he lay long in convulsions and moaned, and already
his eyes were dim

(He had gnawed the Squire's sleeve in his hunger, which
had not agreed with him).

Well, the patient lived and revived, but 'twas feared his
reason was gone ;

He ranted and raved at times, and his wrappings to
shreds were torn ;

But care and science prevailed, and he fell at length
into a sleep,

Peaceful and dreamless it was—as still as a child's and
as deep.

And the demon that vexed him departed, and reason
came back to his brain,

And at last he opened his eyes with a look that was
wondering but sane.

And whom should he see as he gazed, but the form he
had thought never more

Would be blest to his vision—the form of his faithless,
yet dearly loved Laure.

Then came explanations of course, for woman can
always explain

How her conduct has been most correct—nay more,
she can gain

Fresh title to love from the fact that her lover has dared
to doubt,

Fresh value to love since he knows how wretched
existence without.

Well, he won her. Perhaps he was duped ; who
knows, O ye Gods,

How many are duped and made happy ? They *are*
happy, so

WHAT IS THE ODDS ?

THE PILGRIMAGE TO KEVLAAR.

(FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINE.)

I.

The mother stood at the window,
The sun lay on his bed.
"The procession passes, Wilhelm,
"Get up and see," she said.

"I am so sick, my mother,
"I can see and hear no more.
"I think of my poor dead Gretchen,
"And my heart is aching sore."

"Arise! We'll journey to Kevlaar
"With book and rosary,
"And pray the Mother of God to heal
"Thy sick heart's agony."

The sacred banners flutter :
Singing in sacred tone
By the Rhine, wends the procession
On toward Cologne.

In the crowd the mother followed,
Her son by the hand led she :
Their voices joined the chorus
"Praised be thou, Marie !"

II.

The mother of God at Kevlaar
To-day wears her best dress :
She is busy to-day, for many
Come in their sore distress.

And they bring, these sickly people,
As votive offerings meet,
Limbs out of waxwork fashioned,
And waxen hands and feet.

And whoso a wax hand offers,
In his hand is healed a wound :
And whoso a wax foot offers,
His foot is straight made sound.

To Kevlaar went many on crutches
Who can now dance on a rope,
And many a one plays the fiddle
Who had of his fingers no hope.

The mother took a wax taper
And fashioned therefrom a heart.
“ Bring that to the Mother of God,
“ So shall she heal thy smart.”

The son took, sighing, the wax heart
To the holy image apart ;
The tears welled out of his eyes,
And the words welled up from his heart.

“ Thou Blessed beyond all other,
“ Immaculate Mother-Maid,
“ Thou Holy Queen of Heaven,
“ To Thee my plaint is made.

“ I lived alone with my mother
“ At Köllen on the Rhine,
“ The city where many hundred
“ Churches and chapels shine.

“ And next to us lived Gretchen,
“ But she is some time dead—
“ Marie ! I bring thee a wax heart,
“ Heal Thou my heart,” he said.

“ Heal Thou my heart of its sickness,
“ Early and late, I vow,
“ To pray and to sing with fervor,
“ Marie, praised be Thou.”

III.

The sick son and his mother
Slept in their little room :
Then entered the Mother of God
Quite softly in the gloom.

Over the sick she bent her—
Gently her hand she laid
Upon his heart. Then sweetly
She smiled, nor longer staid.

The mother saw all in a vision—
Saw the Virgin come and go—
Then she awoke from slumber,
The dogs were howling so.

There lay outstretched upon the couch
Her son, and he was dead :
And there played on his cheeks, which were pallid,
The light of the sunrise red.

The mother, the hands she folded,
'Twas with her she knew not how ;
With fervor sang she softly—
“ Marie ! praised be thou.”

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